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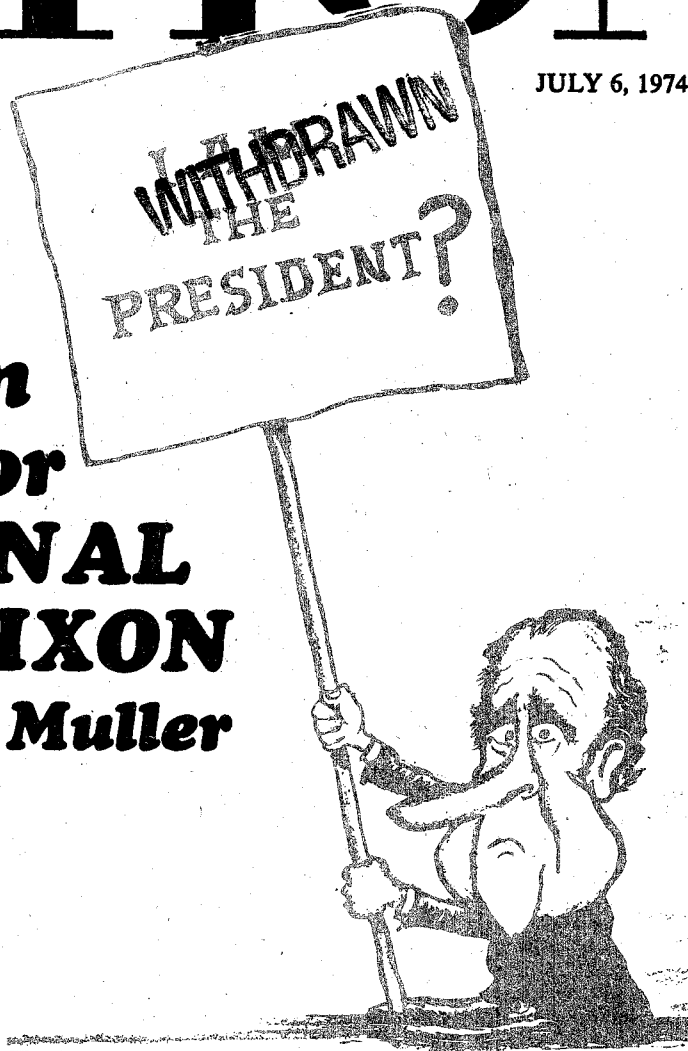
OVER COFFEE WITH OLOF PALME ROBERT SKOLE

THE

NATION

JULY 6, 1974 50 cents

**Mask in
a Mirror
THE FICTIONAL
RICHARD NIXON
Rene J. Muller**



A Peek at Policy

SKELETONS IN THE BELL SYSTEM

Stephen M. Aug

F. O. Matthiessen and the Democratic Spirit

GEORGE H. DOUGLAS

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LETTERS

pension reform: Javits vs. Bernstein

Washington, D.C.

DEAR SIR: In "Bogus Pension Reform" [*The Nation*, Apr. 27], Merton C. Bernstein characterized the bills now headed for conference as being "as misleading as the plans they purport to reform," and suggested Congress would be better off killing the legislation.

I disagree vigorously. It would be a grave disservice to millions of workers to kill the bill which has already been passed overwhelmingly by both houses of Congress.

In Professor Bernstein's view the desirable goal is to conform private pensions as closely as possible to the Social Security System. Most members of the Congress, myself included, oppose that approach because private pensions are voluntary creations of employers and unions. If every plan in the country were required to fit a monolithic Social Security-type framework, it is likely that the incentive to maintain these plans would disappear rapidly and the remaining choice would be to expand Social Security and its highly regressive across-the-board payroll tax financing.

Most workers and their representatives have resisted Professor Bernstein's theories. They do not want their pension plans destroyed, but strengthened to provide adequate uniform standards of protection for their hard-earned pensions.

Aside from these fundamental differences as to how pension plans should be reformed, Bernstein's analysis of the pending legislation—especially the Senate bill—contains several distortions. He cites the 1971 study of the Senate Labor Subcommittee as evidence for the proposition that the five-to-fifteen-year graded vesting schedule in the Senate bill will do little to increase the percentages of workers leaving plans with vested rights. Bernstein has suggested (*Washington Post*, Apr. 7) that matters would be improved if a five-to-ten-year vesting schedule were adopted with 50 per cent vesting beginning at five years of service.

In fact, the 1971 study showed that the overwhelming bulk of employees who forfeited vested rights (80 to 85 per cent) had less than five years of service, and this proposal would do nothing for them! Indeed, Bernstein testified originally before the Senate Labor Committee that his original recommendation is too impractical and costly.

Thus it appears that the real argument between Bernstein and the Congressional reforms in the House and Senate bills is whether a 25 per cent or 50 per cent vesting formula should be enacted.

To use one of his examples, the difference is whether a worker should get \$6.25 a month or \$12.50 a month when he begins to vest. On this point reasonable men can differ without concluding that, if they fail to persuade, the overall reforms are worthless—yet that is Bernstein's conclusion.

To appreciate fully the impact of the Senate's vesting reforms, it should be noted that government studies indicate that only one-third of all the currently covered plan participants are vested in their plan. These same studies estimate that upon enactment of the Senate bill more than two-thirds of the participants will be vested. . . .

That may not be the ideal solution that Bernstein seeks, but it can hardly be termed "misleading."

In this—as in other articles—Professor Bernstein seems determined to ignore the truly significant characteristics of the Congressional proposals in order to demonstrate their alleged deficiencies. Thus he fails to mention the federal government's plan-termination insurance provisions. Yet, no other country—including Sweden, the only country which has legislated a similar program—has gone so far as the Senate bill to make sure that pension promises made are pension promises kept!

If nothing else, the enactment of the termination insurance proposal will guarantee that the Congressional effort to reform private plans will stand as a landmark achievement

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EDITORIALS

Slippery Summit

Too much is expected of summit meetings, even when they are well prepared, as this one is not. From Mr. Nixon's standpoint, jetting to Moscow was a necessity at this time; it may, for a week or two, drain some of the voltage from the Watergate headlines. Or so he hopes. The Middle East trip was meant to do the same, and did to some extent, but the President had scarcely arrived home before Charles Colson decided to plea-bargain, and some of the sheen was lost. So the President left for Moscow in a somewhat debilitated condition, while Mr. Brezhnev, from all reports, is in excellent political health.

This contrast is by no means the principal reason for not taking a sanguine view of prospects for this summit. The President's departure was marred by a series of events indicating trouble on the home front. Paul H. Nitze, top Pentagon representative at the SALT talks, resigned with a reference to "traumatic events unfolding in Washington." Defense Secretary Schlesinger had threatened to resign and there were reports that Kissinger was in dispute with Schlesinger and the Joint Chiefs. Just as the President was taking off, CBS released Walter Cronkite's interview with Solzhenitsyn, who has become a factor in American politics because of his highly critical views on détente. Senators Javits, Jackson and Ribicoff expressed dissatisfaction with a Soviet emigration allowance for Russian Jews of 45,000 annually. Senator Jackson saw fit to engage in an unseemly wrangle with Kissinger over the question of secret understandings at the 1972 talks. And there were rumblings of doubt and misgivings about the summit from several European capitals.

The fact is that détente no longer enjoys the degree of approval that it did a year ago. The number of critics has increased and so has the vehemence of their criticism. The fruits of accommodation have been less bountiful than anticipated. Also, the closer Nixon comes to impeachment, the more the latent critics of détente are willing to voice their views. Those who, like George Meany, went along with Nixon in 1972 despite détente, now want him impeached and cannot find a kind word to say about the summit. The conservatives always opposed warmer relations with Russia and their criticism is now audible. Fearful that Israel's interests are being undercut and also because they distrust Nixon, many liberals now view détente with misgivings. In Washington those Democrats who might be expected to take a stand for strategic arms limitation are for the most part silent, out of reluctance, no doubt, to tangle with Jackson. None of this improves the outlook for the summit.

Perhaps the most important undercutting of its support stems from the way in which impeachment and détente have become intermingled issues. Solzhenitsyn contributes to this confusion by arguing, with great passion, that any rapprochement with the USSR leads to tougher treatment of Russian dissidents, a position he shares with Sakharov and most cold warriors. The effect is to encourage impeachment, even at the expense of détente. On the other hand, some pro-impeachment elements are beginning to look askance at summits because they assume that a

burst of good news from Moscow might raise Nixon's ratings in the polls, if only by a few points, for a few weeks. Also they fear that, to offset his Watergate difficulties, the President might be tempted to make imprudent concessions. This confusion of the issues—impeachment and détente—weakens support for the latter. Those urging impeachment—and for the best of reasons—need to be reminded that détente was a long time in coming and its continuance is imperative.

It is the more imperative just now because of the perilous rush of many nations to acquire a stake, so to speak, in the nuclear poker game which the two great powers have largely monopolized in the past. In the last few weeks, India has acquired the requisite ante to join the game and other nations are eager to participate. In a singularly clumsy maneuver, Prime Minister Wilson, abetted by the Conservatives, secretly exploded an atomic bomb underground at the U.S. Nevada test installation. He would have suffered less political fallout if he had been open about it, and the timing was execrable. The French have conducted another series of tests, and so have the Chinese. Although everyone concerned denies warlike intentions, Nixon's promise of nuclear power plants to Egypt and Israel has contributed to the general uneasiness. This rising anxiety might provide an impetus for the Moscow negotiations, were it not for the fact that the two great powers are still more interested in bilateral agreements than in a comprehensive test ban and some form of universal limitation on nuclear arms.

So anything on the order of a spectacular breakthrough is hardly to be expected from this summit; in fact, Kissinger has been careful to discount the prospects in advance of the opening talks. But a breakdown is equally unlikely; détente is too important to both Brezhnev and Nixon. Also, the Russians cannot afford to make Nixon look bad, although they may not be able to improve his image very much. And there are strong incentives on both sides—increased trade being one—for continuing good relations. So this summit will probably end with the usual communiqués heralding “meaningful” discussions and announcing a series of useful if minor agreements.

Delay, Divide, Discredit

As the President continues throughout the summer to concentrate on summit meetings, ceremonial functions, junkets and lofty diplomatic concerns, while ignoring pressing domestic issues, his army of attorneys, aides and public relations advisers will seek, as they have been doing, to delay, divide and discredit his accusers. It will be their assignment to delay impeachment by any and all means available, while trying to confuse the opposition and sustaining a drumbeat of criticism of the House Judiciary Committee and the special prosecutor for “leaks” and related matters. This tactic, popularly known as “the three Ds,” is working fairly well, thanks in no small measure to the way in which its chairman, members and staff have misconceived the role and responsibility of the House Judiciary Committee.

It is important to prevent, if possible, the committee from dividing on partisan lines and to assure a full and fair investigation. It must also be conceded that it has

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faced a difficult task. The decision not to hold public hearings in the early phases of the inquiry has been largely responsible for "leaks" which have embarrassed the chairman and counsel. To persuade thirty-eight committee members and their aides not to leak information to the press in an election year is about as difficult and thankless a task as it would be to ride herd on an equal number of gossip columnists. On the other hand, if the committee had held public hearings from the start it would have been accused of creating an atmosphere prejudicial to the rights of defendants in some of the pending Watergate prosecutions. But the committee has added to its difficulties by proceeding as if it had to convict before it could charge. The committee's function, analogous to that of a grand jury, is to determine what if any grounds for impeachment exist. Yet in interviews committee members continue to speak as though they thought it was their function to weigh all the evidence, on all possible charges, and then pass judgment. That is the Senate's role.

By proceeding as though it were a trial jury, the committee has made it easier for the President's aides to complain of "leaks," to argue and delay, and to carry on an elaborate publicity counteroffensive consisting of interviews on network talk programs, inspired articles and columns, attacks on the press and pseudo-events staged by such groups as the National Citizens Committee for Fairness to the President which, we now know, has been the beneficiary of substantial donations from the Teamsters union and its president, Frank Fitzsimmons.

By this time nearly every expert on and off campus has had his say about what constitute impeachable offenses; to the extent that the question can be clarified by debate and discussion this has been done. And as to certain basic charges, such as not faithfully executing the laws and obstructing justice, the President continues to add to the wealth of existing evidence by current tactics which confirm that he is still seeking to prevent a full, fair and prompt investigation of Watergate. So the committee should get on with its work and pay less attention to the carping criticism and delaying tactics of the President's men. It was the President who started the chant that one year of Watergate was enough; it is the President who even today seeks to delay impeachment, which is the only means of publicly testing the charges alleged against him. Speaking in the Senate on April 11, Senator Ervin stated two invincible conclusions:

"First, that the President has needlessly prolonged for himself and the nation the agony of Watergate by withholding from the Senate Select Committee, the grand jury, and the House Judiciary Committee tapes and documents relevant to the matters they are obligated to investigate. Second, that the President could have spared himself and the nation the agony of Watergate if he had acted at the beginning with the forthrightness which ought to characterize the occupant of his high office." In these respects, the President's attitude has been primarily responsible not merely for the fact that the nation continues to "wallow in Watergate" but also for the "leaks" of which his partisans complain so loudly. If he had been forthcoming from the outset, there would have been no necessity for hearings and investigations of a character that have made "leaks" more or less inevitable.

The Nixon Loophole

By a vote of 71 to 0, the California State Assembly has closed the loophole—if one ever existed—that enabled President and Mrs. Nixon, courtesy of a favorable ruling by the GOP-controlled State Franchise Board, to avoid state income taxes, although they had acquired their handsome residence at San Clemente in 1969 and had registered to vote in California in 1970. California Congressmen in House and Senate pay state income taxes but are exempt from income taxes in the District of Columbia.

The State Franchise Board ruling was based on the theory that the Nixons were not absent from the state for "a temporary or transitory purpose" and therefore did not need to pay state income taxes. Logically, one might have thought that this ruling would make them residents of Washington, D.C., and subject to its taxes, but they have never paid District taxes either. The California legislature has come up with a simple answer to the riddle. The new legislation provides that any person who votes in California shall be automatically obligated to pay state income taxes; if he pays income taxes in another state, then the amount of such taxes can be deducted from the California tax bill. This amendment will make the Nixons liable to pay 1974 state income taxes; they have already paid \$5,081 in back taxes to the state of California, but that applied only to California-derived income. At long last, then, the vexing question of the Nixons' legal residence for tax purposes has finally been resolved.

The Silbert Nomination

The nomination of Earl J. Silbert to be U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia should be rejected. Failing that, it should be withdrawn or the hearings postponed until after an impeachment trial. There is no need to infer—although such an inference would be plausible—that the President made the nomination to reward Mr. Silbert for past political services. From the record, it is clear that Mr. Silbert did his best, along with Asst. Atty. Gen. Henry E. Petersen, to keep the Watergate inquiry from reaching into upper echelons at the White House and at the Committee to Re-Elect the President. Mr. Nixon wanted the Justice Department inquiry stopped "at the pass" and, in effect, that is what happened. The tactic might have succeeded but for subsequent disclosures for which neither Silbert nor Petersen can claim credit. That they were "snookered," as Petersen puts it, does not impugn their integrity, but it does raise doubt as to their judgment. And another consideration is involved. Confirmation of the Silbert nomination might imply approval of the early handling of the Watergate investigation by the Justice Department; it might also imply approval of the President's role in the inquiry.

But there is still another level to the argument against confirmation. In responding to questions about why the original inquiry was not carried as far as it might have been, Mr. Petersen advances a dubious theory of the prosecutor's responsibility in investigations that involve Senators, Congressmen and government officials. He argues, in effect—and Mr. Silbert would doubtless concur—that if the "target" of a criminal investigation is a rank-

ing politician or official, a special standard applies. True, even the rumor of an investigation can be extremely damaging to a prominent person, because of the lively interest the media invariably show in such targets. But this consideration applies to all persons of prominence, not merely to public officials. No doubt special care should be taken in such cases to guard against premature "leaks," unfounded gossip, and the like. But in terms of diligence and thoroughness, there should be one standard for all criminal investigations. A U.S. Attorney, of all enforcement officials, should not hesitate to pursue the logical line of inquiry wherever it may lead, even if it takes him into the White House and the Oval Office. U.S. Atty. James Thompson of the Northern District of Illinois has made a national reputation by resolute prosecution of state and local officials, whatever their rank. It is hard to shake the conviction that if Thompson had been the U.S. Attorney in the District of Columbia, the early handling of the Watergate inquiry might have taken a quite different course. The Silbert nomination should be rejected because his record in the Watergate inquiry indicates that he was much too easily "snookered," and not merely because, as Senator Ervin insists, the President should have had "a better psychological attitude" than to send the Silbert nomination to the Senate at this time.

Let 'Em Eat Alpo

In affluent and middle-class neighborhoods, dog food is eaten by dogs. In the slums people consume about a third of the dog and cat food. They are relatively fortunate; some poorer people subsist on chocolate bars and stale coffee, others on stale bread and hog jowls.

This is perfectly all right as far as many comfortable Americans are concerned, but the press keeps running depressing headlines: "Nation's Needy Seen Hungrier and Poorer"; "U.S. Needy Found Poorer, Hungrier than Four Years Ago"; "For the Poor: More Hunger"; and so on. Much of this unpleasantness was inspired by a 189-page report submitted by a panel of twenty-six experts to the Senate Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs. The document could be pronounced "sensational" or "revolutionary," except that anyone with eyes and ears must have known the facts in the report and the headlines—that, five years after President Nixon promised to end hunger in America, the poor are poorer and hungrier.

The twenty-six authors were selected from among 100 specialists and included nutritionists, government officials, economists and even a few of the poor. The seeming paradox is that in fiscal 1970 total spending for federal food programs was \$1.6 billion; in fiscal 1974 it rose to \$5.1 billion. To be sure, more people were fed, but inflation more than offset the increased spending, and by all indications will continue to do so unless the problem is taken more seriously than heretofore. Inflation hurts some people very little; it hurts most people some, but for the poor it verges on disaster. The government's "economy food plan," comprising the lowest priced foods, jumped in cost 42 per cent over a three-and-one-quarter-year period ending in March 1974. And that food plan, the Department of Agriculture concedes, does not provide adequate nutrition over an extended period.

The effects of inflation are aggravated by red tape, bureaucratic inertia and indifference and, in some places, outright corruption. Thus, only 35.6 per cent of the 37 million Americans eligible for food-stamp relief were getting it as of last February. The poor who are still buying food cannot "spend down," as middle-class housewives do; the food they were buying was already the cheapest on the store shelves.

Worse, that 42 per cent inflation in food prices is only an average. Austin Scott gives some appalling figures in *The Washington Post*: in the same three-and-one-quarter-year period, the price of dried beans rose 256 per cent; rice 124 per cent; flour 80 per cent; margarine 63 per cent; bologna 50 per cent. Poor families spend up to 60 per cent of their budgets on food. Families earning up to \$7,500 a year in August 1973 were said to be suffering from "negative asset movement"—a euphemism for going further into debt (if they have any credit left) or selling or pawning their belongings, such as they are.

What goes on here? It is not lack of food; the supermarkets and small food shops are well stocked. What the poor suffer from—marvelous to relate—is lack of money. The situation has not changed in forty-five years. Since a redistribution of income is howled down as "communism," at least the fantastic documentation required to get a food allotment could be simplified, together with the accepted philosophy that the poor, being shiftless, lazy and dishonest, deserve to be miserable.

Private Heroes

Watergate has brought to national prominence and invested with permanent historical interest a set of characters who will never be anyone's heroes: Colson, Halde- man, Ehrlichman, Mitchell, Stans, et al. By contrast, figures such as Judges Sirica and Gesell and Messrs. Cox, Richardson and Ruckelshaus are public heroes. But there are at least two private heroes. Frank Wills, the black guard who gave the alarm, is one. Another is police Sgt. Paul Leeper, 35, native of Fairmont, W. Va., member in good standing of the Church of Christ. It was Leeper who, with two colleagues, responded to the alarm and arrested the well-dressed burglars who had \$100 bills stuffed in their pockets.

Leeper—the subject of a recent profile in *Parade* magazine by Fred Blumenthal—is still second in command of the old clothes detail, or "bum squad," in northwest Washington; with him are his fellow officers, John Barrett and Carl Shoffler. Leeper still goes around in a beat-up car, wearing an old jacket and a go-to-hell golf hat. The three men presented a remarkable contrast in gents tailoring to the burglars they arrested that memorable night. Nowadays, when Leeper drives his daughter to kindergarten, he points to the Watergate complex and says, "That's where it all began." And he is right. Wills, Leeper, Barrett and Shoffler, as Blumenthal points out, "pushed the rock that tipped the boulders that started the avalanche that filled the valley." As is the fate of such private heroes, their reward derives from knowing that, at "a point in time," their actions insured that Watergate would become a crucial event in American history.

THE FICTIONAL RICHARD NIXON

RENE J. MULLER

self. All that a person is tempted to call by the name *Me* or *Mine*.

—William James

persona . . . 2. *Psychology:* The role that a person assumes in order to display his conscious intentions to himself and to others. [Latin *persona*, mask.]

—American Heritage Dictionary

Richard Nixon is a continuously enigmatic and elusive character, and the word character is chosen carefully. If I see him correctly, the revelations of the last two years which collectively have come to be known as Watergate in no sense represent a discontinuity in his career, but are rather a quintessence, an unsurprising culmination of what we have seen intimated for twenty-five years.

Carl Jung made the distinction between the self and the persona, that mask which a person presents to the world as himself. In every man's life there is considerable incongruity between self and persona, but with Richard Nixon the self seems to have been all but absorbed by the mask. Trying to figure Nixon out, a number of journalists, historians, even a novelist or two, have touched on the idea of a diminished self. What follows is an attempt to interpret, with the help of some of this material, Nixon the man and the politician in terms of Jung's classic delineation of the self-persona disjunction.

Nixon's persona is and always has been his career. In "Horatio Alger in the White House" (*Harper's*, September 1972), Richard Poirier tried to measure the man against the office. He argued that Nixon was a product of the Horatio Alger tradition ("fixation on merit and the self-made man") and compared him to Fitzgerald's Jay Gatsby, who, "like most American heroes, has a personal taste for bareness while being inspired by extraordinary visions of the future." In the Alger sense, "self-made" means that someone starts with "nothing" (without money, position or education—unless, of course, acquired Abe Lincoln style) and through perseverance ends up with at least money and position.

Here the term "self-made" has an ironic, indeed inverted meaning because it refers to a goal which has been approached and attained without any provision for the acquisition of self in the Jungian sense. What is "made" here is not a "self" but a fortune, a career or a reputation. Poirier writes that "throughout every aspect of his career Nixon has been at once the actor and the director of a play in which the self has been made up, fashioned for the attainment of a goal." Precisely. Nixon has been *made up*, not made.

Poirier notes that in the tradition of the American self-made man "the position attained is made to substitute

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for personal attributes sacrificed in order to attain it . . . and, as a consequence, Nixon's concern for the respect due to his office and the respect due to the United States sounds less like a call to grandeur [as with de Gaulle, ironically one of Nixon's idols] than a claim for psychic disability pay." In July 1962, shortly before he was defeated for governor of California, Richard Nixon was heard to say that it took an awful lot to embarrass him. Poirier writes that "he was willing to accept, even to court, personal humiliations that could be calculated to further his public ambitions." We need only recall the Checkers speech during the 1952 campaign or the acceptance speech at the 1968 Republican convention—wherein he recalled his enlistment in World War II as a poor Quaker boy going off to fight a war for reasons his mother couldn't understand—to see how ready he is to permit the erosion of an already marginal self. Where there is little self there is little self-respect, and one cannot lose what one does not have.

Reviewing the Mazo and Hess biography, *Nixon: A Political Portrait* for *The New York Times Book Review* in 1968, Milton Viorst wrote that "what emerges is not a man with feelings and beliefs, but an actor on the stage of history, for whom someone else might have written most of the lines." Poirier sees a similarity between Nixon's use of language and that of fictional Horatio Alger heroes such as Gatsby, Cooper's Deerslayer and Faulkner's Sutpen of *Absalom, Absalom!*: "When they speak or act it is not freely or gregariously, as if their personalities were in any way larger than their 'designs,' but rather the other way around, as if they were compelled by them. Acutely uncomfortable in free human interchange, their language is stilted; their human enthusiasms, like Nixon's for sports, ring false; and in the tension of personal encounters that can't be managed by the remote control of prepared rhetoric, they can appear awkward to the point of ludicrousness. One such instance, when Nixon talked to some soldiers in Vietnam, is taken verbatim by Gore Vidal [in *An Evening With Richard Nixon*] from *Newsweek*":

Nixon: And where are you from?

Soldier: Texas.

Nixon: Texas! I'll be darned. Think the Cowboys can beat the Packers this year?

Soldier: I hope so, sir.

Nixon: They've lost their quarterback, you know. And where are you from?

Soldier: Chicago.

Nixon: Chicago! Have you seen the Cubs this year? They might take it all. Are you a Cub or a White Sox fan?

Soldier: I'm a Yankee fan, sir.

(*Nixon stares unhappily at the black soldier. Neither can think of anything to say.*)

Nixon: Do you ever get any black-eyed peas or collard greens out here?

Black soldier (stunned): I'm from Boston.

Embarrassing? Self-destroying? Richard Nixon is, in a

sense, a fictional President—a fictional self. Watergate reads like fiction. As Garry Wills put it: "Every gesture of White House virtue now prompts laughter, as Nixon steals David Frye's act—no one, henceforth, can rival him in mocking Nixon."

Nixon has always had trouble with the press. Writing about the relations of Nixon and his two predecessors with newspapermen and television commentators in *Esquire* (April 1974), David Halberstam says that Nixon's problem with the media comes from the "conflict between the intense privacy of the inner man and the immense public demands of the public career." Stated in Jungian terms, the conflict is between a marginal self and a constantly embattled persona. Nixon presents himself to the world as the mask of his office. When reporters try to get under the mask—back to the self—they are met with resistance and resentment because Nixon's marginal self cannot cope with that probing, cannot adequately explain and justify a persona which is not derived from the self but is a separate creation. Halberstam maintains that reporters are always measuring a man in terms of character, looking for the man behind the politician, and that with Nixon, they do not find him. "No one likes being covered constantly," he says, "none of us likes our face in the mirror unless we own the mirror." And for one who doesn't own the self behind the face (persona) that appears in the mirror, that coverage must be intolerable.

What better way for Nixon to hinder self-revelation than to have Ronald Ziegler speak for him? Could there be a more suitable exponent of the Nixon persona and, concomitantly, a better indication that the Nixon self barely exists? In 1984 George Orwell looked ahead to a time when a Draconian government would make the viable self an impossibility and gave the language reflecting that situation a name—Newspeak: "Ultimately it was hoped to make articulate speech issue from the larynx without involving the higher brain centers at all. This aim was frankly admitted in the Newspeak word *Duckspeak*, meaning 'to quack like a duck.'" Newspeak may not be so unthinkable by 1984, considering what progress has already been made with Nixonese and Zieglerata.

In the *Esquire* article, Halberstam asked parenthetically whether the departures of Herbert Klein and Robert Finch were hastened because they got along so well with newsmen. If they got on with the newsmen, Halberstam postulated, Nixon may have felt they were talking and, if they were talking, that they were revealing and, if they were revealing, that they were disloyal. The Nixon persona, lacking the support of and continuity with the marginal Nixon self, would resent and fear any revelation not made specifically to advance the persona. Nixon is not in touch with and does not know what there is of his self.

In an article for the *Saturday Review* (September 23, 1972), based on his book *The Presidential Character: Predicting Performance in the White House*, James David Barber analyzed and categorized the attitudes toward their work of a number of Presidents from Woodrow Wilson to Richard Nixon. Barber makes the initial distinction between negativists and activists—activists believe the President must be an energizing force and they practice that belief in their daily lives—and further subdivides the



Blaine, Hamilton Spectator (Canada)

activists into active-negative and active-positive Presidents: "Active-positive Presidents—recent examples are Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry Truman and John Kennedy—experience the office as an opportunity not only to implement social reform but also to fulfill themselves personally. They value productiveness highly and adopt flexible approaches toward achieving their goals. They exude confidence and the sense of enjoying the power of the Presidency."

"By contrast," Barber continues, "active-negative Presidents—Lyndon Johnson, Herbert Hoover and Woodrow Wilson, for example—start out strong and flexible but wind up defeated and rigid. They experience in the office a basic contradiction between intense effort and low emotional reward for that effort. In fact, the harder they work, the worse they feel. They are hyperambitious, compulsive, endure-today-to-enjoy-tomorrow types. Deeply unsure of themselves, they feel aggressive and suspicious toward those around them" (emphasis added).

After observing him in office for one term, Barber felt that Nixon would take his place among the active-negative Presidents. In fact, Nixon seems to have been an active-negative type throughout his career, as exemplified by a quote from the Halberstam article cited previously: "In 1959, when he met Khrushchev at the famed kitchen debate, he was at his absolute best. Khrushchev caught him by surprise—Nixon was, after all, the Soviet leader's host at the American exhibition and yet the verbal dialogue, some of it threatening and insulting, was initiated by the Russian. Under instant pressure, Nixon handled himself with skill and balance, in all an intelligent, tempered performance. One of his finest hours. He thereupon went back to the American Embassy and came completely

apart, drinking very heavily. He did not know himself, he did not know how well he had done."

Barber further says of active-negative Presidents that although they come across as adroit political realists, they eventually endanger themselves and perhaps even the country by taking a stand on "principle" and sticking to it regardless of the consequences. There are the familiar examples of Wilson and his League of Nations and Johnson and the war in Vietnam. Richard Nixon has never stood on principle (except perhaps the negative principle of anti-communism) but came close to it with his evocation of executive privilege, when asked to provide witnesses and documents for the Watergate investigation. Nixon's "principle," in this case, did not emanate from any requirement of the self—ordinarily the source of what we think of as principle—but rather from the requirements of the embattled persona: it is a supreme and telling irony that the closest Richard Nixon has come to taking a positive stand on anything after more than a quarter century in public life, is in defense of what is almost certain to be revealed as a lie. As for Barber's prediction that an active-negative President Nixon might be willing to sacrifice the best interests of the nation in defense of a "principle," the military alert over the Arab-Israeli war in October 1973 is a chilling recollection.

In an effort to understand how Richard Nixon became what he is, Barber looked back to his childhood in Whittier, Calif. and found several traumatic experiences which could have engendered Nixon's pessimism and crisis-haunted view of life: there were at least three near-fatal injuries and illnesses, the sudden death of two brothers and severe economic insecurity. But perhaps more important for this discussion is Nixon's relationship with his parents, who were very different kinds of people and who made very different emotional demands on the boy. His mother, to whom he developed strong ties, was emotionally restrained to the point that she would not permit herself even to feel anger, much less express it. His father, on the contrary, according to the description of a local cleric was "brusque, loud, dogmatic, strong-willed, emotional and impatient." Barber concludes: "The contrast thrust Richard into the mediator role, not only in practical terms but, more importantly, in emotional terms. He took the part of the responsible son, adapting his mood now to his mother's long silences, now to his father's diatribes. In that highly charged atmosphere he struggled to pattern himself after both parents; there was little room for developing an identity [a self] of his own."

This analysis offers a satisfying—though certainly not definitive—explanation for the origin of Nixon's self-persona disjunction. In fact, it reads much like a case history from R.D. Laing's book on schizophrenia, *The Divided Self*, but with one important difference. Although the conflict the young Nixon experienced was potentially schizophrenic—capable of inducing a schizoid split—there is nothing in Richard Nixon's public or private life to suggest psychic splitting. From all available evidence it seems that the persona (substitute self) has very little competition from the "real" self and represents a relatively stable and integral psychic entity. In Nixon's case, there is simply too little self to cause any significant trouble.

In *The Future Is Now*, a biography of George Allen,

coach of the Washington Redskins and a long-time friend of Richard Nixon, William Gildea and Kenneth Turan give the following quote from Allen on the subject of achievement: "The achiever is the only individual who is truly alive. There can be no inner satisfaction in simply driving a fine car or eating in a fine restaurant or watching a good movie or television program. Those who think they're enjoying themselves doing any of that are half dead and don't know it. *I see no difference between a chair and the man who sits in the chair unless he is accomplishing something*" (emphasis added).

This could as easily have been said by Nixon. What it reveals is the total lack of value given to the state of being, or *existing*, as contrasted to doing or *achieving*. When one is achieving one is also of course existing; however, a distinction is to be made between an achievement and the enhancement of self which may or may not accompany it. Allen's claim that there is no difference between a chair and the man who sits in the chair unless he is accomplishing something, denies the very idea of self. This disclosure may contribute to the understanding of how Richard Nixon's "accomplishments" failed to augment his self and, far more important, how that marginal self failed to influence his "accomplishments." For Allen and Nixon there can be no "inner satisfaction" in anything that is not an "achievement" because for them there is no inner self. For this kind of man it is as though the tie between the achievement and the achiever were severed, leading to an ineluctable stasis of self.

In "Richard Nixon's Seventh Crisis" (*The New York Times Magazine*, July 8), Garry Wills argued that Watergate (and all that the word now encompasses) was motivated by a need for Nixon—from the beginning of his career an outsider and insurgent—to have something to fight *against* in order to secure his hold on the Presidency. He had the 1972 election wrapped up from the start, but because he could not really possess the Presidency—even though he was the President—the insurgent mounted a counterinsurgency effort *against himself*, either directly or indirectly through his assistants, authorizing the burglary of Watergate, the break-in of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist's office, the "dirty tricks" against Muskie, Humphrey and McGovern, the (largely unneeded) illegal campaign contributions, and all the rest.

This analysis by Wills—certainly our most incisive interpreter of Richard Nixon—can be taken a step further and the Nixon "outsider-insider" dichotomy seen as a consequence of the marginal Nixon self and the disjointed persona. Because Nixon could not experience satisfaction from *being* President, he had to continue *achieving* the office he already had. As with his friend George Allen, it was not enough to sit in the chair—in this case the chair behind the desk in the Oval Office—and *be* President. The Presidency had to be re-achieved, re-accomplished and retaken from, or more precisely, at the expense of, the (marginal) Nixon self, its only real rival. Watergate is, as Wills says, "the perfect expression of our outsider's inability simply to possess, to find peace inside." And what "outsider" means here is that Nixon is outside of, disjointed from, his self.

Another manifestation of Nixon as "outsider-insider" is found in the *Saturday Review* article by James David

Barber cited earlier. Barber notes Nixon's striking self-consciousness and penchant for self-dramatization (reacting to the rejection of the Haynsworth and Carswell nominations by denouncing the Senate on TV, the "ego trips" to Peking and Moscow, the bravura television announcements of his first Cabinet and the release of edited transcripts of the White House tapes), and writes that "in these self-dramatizations Nixon becomes part of his audience, perpetually watching and correcting his own performance and managing his own feelings." He includes an account by Nixon of his arrival at the airport in Caracas during the stormy South American tour in 1958: "The minute I stepped off the airplane, while getting the salute, I cased the place. (I always do that when I walk out.) I looked it all over and watched the kind of crowd, thinking, where will I make an unscheduled stop, where will we move out and shake hands and so forth . . . we walked down the steps from the airplane, and I quickly made a few mental notes and decisions. As we trooped the line I decided not to wave to the crowd, but to ignore it since they were showing disrespect for their flag and their national anthem as well as ours."



Los Angeles Times

"If He Gets Hurt, It's Your Fault!"

Even more distressing than the familiar facts of Nixon's career is the absence of any decision or action by him which seems to have been motivated by considerations of ethics or morality. During the last years of the war in Vietnam, as the justifications for our involvement there wore thin and finally became absurd, Nixon kept insisting on what he called "peace with honor." To Nixon "honor" meant not losing face, the persona, the mask. He *could not* be the first American President to preside over what he considered a military defeat, because the marginal self of this essentially destroyed man could not absorb and withstand that blow to the face. The moral arguments cut no ice with him and did not impinge on the process of his making the decision to continue the war. His self, from which any morally motivated act would have had to originate, was simply too weak to compete with the drive to perpetuate the mask. Richard Nixon is not, as has so often been alleged, an immoral man; he is an *amoral* man.

From all evidence, Nixon doesn't seem to be particularly religious. But upon being elected he was quick to invite prominent religious leaders to the White House for "prayer meetings" and to be photographed with them. Though brought up a Quaker, he seems to have no particular preference for the denomination of these services—Billy Graham, Cardinal Cooke and various rabbis have appeared regularly at the White House over the years—and the choices seem to have been made to achieve identification with the largest number of religiously inclined voters. It is interesting to compare Nixon's "ecumenical" approach to worship to the manner of observance of his two predecessors. John Kennedy attended Sunday Mass regularly, which as a Catholic he was required to do. Lyndon Johnson rarely went to his own church but occasionally accompanied his daughter, Lucy—who was then taking instruction to become a Catholic—to Mass. One somehow never felt that Johnson was doing this to get votes.

Nixon often invokes the name of God when trying to justify his actions. This was particularly noticeable in the

major TV addresses on Vietnam during his first term. In *The Nixon Theology* Charles Henderson tries to fathom Nixon's nominal alliance with the Almighty: "Nixon systematically appropriates the vocabulary of the church—faith, trust, hope, belief, spirit—and applies these words not to a transcendent God but to his own nation, and worse, to his personal vision of what that nation should be. Lacking awareness of the self-interest that corrupts even the best intentions and the most pragmatic policies, he allows himself a free hand to range around the world, applying American power in the firm belief that he is being counseled by the 'best angels' of his own nature; lacking a transcendent God, he seems to make patriotism his religion, the American Dream his deity. Far from returning to the 'spiritual sources' that made this country great, he accomplishes a macabre reversal of those traditions, selling the mirror image as the original."

It was apt of Henderson to use the term "mirror image," for the mirror image is never superimposable on the original. This reversal—this inversion of truth that any moral person would call a lie—has been a staple of Nixon's career from the beginning: when he ran for the Senate in California in 1948 against Helen Gahagan Douglas, he took advantage of rising anti-Communist sentiment, accusing her of being sympathetic to the Communist cause and going so far as to have the accusations printed on pink paper. (The charge remains unverified.) When he won the nomination in 1968, he chose Spiro Agnew as his running mate with the explanation that if anything should happen to the President, Agnew would be the man best qualified to replace him. (An intriguing interpretation is that the choice of Agnew was directed by a blind drive to protect the persona [his Presidency] from the threat of annihilation.) By assuring that no advantageous succession would result, Nixon could reduce the chance at least of a "rational" assassination.

When he announced the appointment of his Cabinet

on national TV in December 1968, he commended his choices by citing the independence of these men and promised to ask their counsel. (We know how independent John Mitchell and Maurice Stans were and what happened to Walter Hickel when he offered Nixon some advice.) When dissatisfaction with South Vietnamese President Thieu became widespread among the American people, Nixon tried to shore Thieu up by calling him "one of the four or five greatest leaders in the world." (Speaking at an anti-war rally at Johns Hopkins shortly thereafter, former Sen. Ernest Gruening set the record straight on that question when he replied that Thieu was one of the four or five *worst* leaders in the world.) And when Nixon went on national TV on April 29 to announce that he was turning over edited transcripts of the White House tapes to the House Judiciary Committee, he said that, read in their entirety, the transcripts would satisfy the American people that he had told the truth all along, even allowing for certain sections which could be interpreted in more than one way. (In fact, the 1,300-page volume compels the reader to the opposite conclusion: that Nixon approved of hush money for E. Howard Hunt and at least considered clemency for the Watergate burglars; that an effort was made to limit the information given to investigators; that false testimony was fabricated for potential witnesses and that every effort was made to hold to a minimum the number of persons who could be accused of criminality.)

The editorial page of *The New York Times* for May 11 reprinted an excerpt of a conversation between President Nixon and former Assistant Atty. Gen. Henry Petersen from the edited transcript of the White House tapes, sandwiched between two statements made by the President shortly before and after the conversation took place. The editorial, "'Image' and Reality," is reproduced as it appeared and needs no commentary.

The judicial process is moving ahead as it should, and I shall aid it in all appropriate ways. . . . I condemn any attempts to cover up in this case, no matter who is involved.

President Nixon, public statement, April 17, 1973

* * *

From the White House Transcripts, April 27, 1973:

Mr. Nixon: We've got to head them off at the pass. Because it's so damned—so damn dangerous to the Presidency, in a sense. . . .

Mr. Petersen: Mr. President I tell you, . . . We have to draw the line. We have no mandate to investigate the President. We investigate Watergate, and I don't know where that line draws, but we have to draw that all the time.

Mr. Nixon: Good. Because if Dean is implicating the Presidency—we are going to damned well find out about it. . . .

Mr. Petersen: My understanding of our responsibilities is that if it came to that I would have to come to you and say, "We can't do that." The only people who have jurisdiction to do that is the House of Representatives, as far as I'm concerned.

Mr. Nixon: That's right. . . . Now understand that this is not a grand jury thing.

* * *

I was determined that we should get to the bottom of

the matter, and that the truth should be fully brought out—no matter who was involved.

President Nixon, public statement, April 30, 1973

In *Nixon Agonistes* Garry Wills raises the question of Nixon's authenticity: "He is the least 'authentic' man alive, the late mover, the tester of responses, submissive to 'the discipline of consent.' There is one Nixon only, though there seem to be new ones all the time—he will try to be whatever people want." Is Nixon sincere? Was he "sincere," for example, when he insisted on an "honorable" settlement in Vietnam? It is clear now that by "honor" he meant preserving the record of American military invincibility, a tradition which the Nixon persona could not tolerate breaking under any circumstances. (Charles de Gaulle—a monumental self if there ever was one—had no problem pulling out of Algeria when it became clear that France's cause there was lost.) If continuing the war to achieve "victory" meant the loss of some 25,000 more American lives and the virtual physical destruction of Vietnam, then, to the Nixon persona, that price had to be paid. At all costs, respect for the *Presidency* had to be maintained just as *America* had to be kept from appearing to be "a pitiful, helpless giant" by the invasion of Cambodia in 1970. The question of sincerity in Nixon's case is not a straightforward one because, in the Jungian sense of the word, there is very little self to this man—there is no Richard Nixon.

Bruce Mazlish, M.I.T. "psychohistorian" and author of *In Search of Nixon*, sees him as "an insecurely held self," but feels that a certain constancy of behavior exempts him from the judgment of hypocrisy: "Acting, role-playing, denial—these patterns of behavior have been constant throughout Mr. Nixon's life. . . . Nixon is not being a hypocrite in his statements. He believes with total conviction in the role he is playing at any given moment; it is the source of his power over his audience. . . . Nixon is 'genuine' and never more so than when he is acting a part, such as the aggrieved innocent man." (*Washington Post*, November 26, 1973.)

But it seems to me that Mazlish here side-steps the central question. For when we speak of acting and role-playing, which are attributes of the persona, even though these posturings are made over a period of years and are therefore "constant," how is this constancy of persona to be related to authenticity, sincerity, belief and genuineness, which are attributes of the self? It may be that such words are simply not apposite to the analysis of a marginal self such as Nixon. Before the law, he is responsible for his crimes because there is no reason to see him as anything but sane. But it is possible that "morally" some other standard will have to be used to judge him.

In both the current grand jury and House Judiciary Committee investigations of Watergate, a cardinal question has been what was said by the President in the Oval Office on March 21 about hush money for the original Watergate defendants. Last summer, John Dean testified that Nixon said raising \$1 million to meet the demands of the defendants would be "no problem." H.R. Halde- man, however, also present at the March 21st meeting, later testified that the President immediately added "but it would be wrong." (The White House tape of the con-

versation apparently did not include any such qualification by the President, and Haldeman, last February, was indicted for perjury by the grand jury.) At a news conference on August 22, the President said that Haldeman's recollection of what was said at the meeting was accurate and added that he [Mr. Nixon] recalled saying, "It is wrong, *it won't work*" (italics added). Here in the President's own words, in a Freudian (or perhaps Jungian) slip, the amoral self and the persona are seen as one: it is wrong *because* it won't work.

But so far, the most incisive look into the psyche of Richard Nixon has come with the change in tack of the White House defense which occurred soon after James St. Clair succeeded Charles Allen Wright as chief legal counsel. This new approach was explained by Mr. St. Clair when he said in an interview that he did not think of himself as defending Richard Nixon but as defending the Presidency itself. In a speech to a group of Chicago businessmen on March 15, Mr. Nixon said he would not

resign because he "refused to be a party to the destruction of the Presidency of the United States." Here we have the final Nixon epiphany—a marginal-self President defending a depersonalized Presidency. Having all but run out of acceptable options for his self-defense—the defense of his self, that is—the President would, in Tom Wicker's words, "have us believe that he is not so much a mortal man [a self] as a function . . . that Richard Nixon, having blended his mortality into the continuing flow of the Presidency [his persona], is above the law."

The emperor is naked. The chimera of a Nixon self is dispersed and he is revealed as a persona, a mask, a role. Again Wicker: "Mr. St. Clair and Mr. Nixon are trying to defend Richard Nixon by proclaiming that *he is not Richard Nixon at all* but the historical Presidency, which must not be impaired" (italics added). Never having been quite mortal, Nixon is now straining for a kind of immortality—he is trying to preserve his persona and his Presidency for time and for history. □

LABOR & THE COMMUNISTS

A SORT OF DETENTE

MICHAEL KIRKHORN

A few weeks ago the executive council of the AFL-CIO quietly dropped from its rules a restriction barring ex-Communists from holding union office until they had been out of the party for five years. Soon thereafter, ex-Communists Thomas Lux and James Siesennop were grumpily informed by George Meany that they were entitled to demand a new election in the Milwaukee steelworkers' local which had excluded them from office.

Lux and Siesennop had violated no laws. The provisions of the Landrum-Griffin Act which once made it a crime for Communists or former Communists to hold union office were ruled unconstitutional in a 1965 Supreme Court decision written by Chief Justice Earl Warren. But that ruling left the customs, habits and ideological preferences of labor unions untouched. Nine years passed before the AFL-CIO brought its rule, binding until then on 160 directly affiliated unions, into nearer accord with the law (it's still against the rules for present members of the party to hold union office).

AFL-CIO officials said the council had been moved simply by a sudden urge to conform. Experienced observers attributed the lapse of time to inertia: "Apathy or forgetfulness," one explained. In Milwaukee, Curry First, lawyer for Lux and Siesennop, said the "limited and begrudging relief" offered his clients was a response to the appeal they had made to the 79-year-old Meany.

Meany's 10-page decision notes correctly that Lux and Siesennop did not admit that they had been Communists before they were elected to their union positions a year ago—Lux to a term on the union negotiating committee and as delegate to the Milwaukee Labor Council;

Siesennop as chairman of the legislative committee and shop steward at A.O. Smith, a manufacturer of automotive and truck frames where they both were employed. Paul Blackman, president of Smith Steelworkers Local 19806, learned of the Communist affiliation several months later.

He thereupon filed union charges that the two ex-Communists had taken office improperly. The local's executive board refused by a vote of 5 to 4 to dismiss Lux and Siesennop, who were regarded as dedicated unionists. But when the membership protested, the board reconsidered (Lux and Siesennop crying "double jeopardy") and voted 5 to 4 for dismissal. The two complained, but Blackman replied that they could have been thrown out summarily. Then Lux and Siesennop sued in federal district court, claiming that the rule violated freedom of thought, which was "absolutely and unconditionally protected."

The legal papers make no mention of anti-communism, but a glance at the transcript of the executive board hearings makes it evident that the crusty suspicions which kept an anachronistic rule in the regulations of the AFL-CIO for nearly a decade after the Landrum-Griffin decision are far from dead in conservative industrial cities like Milwaukee. Blackman said during the hearing:

I think this board has to determine who the membership wants here. Brothers Lux and Siesennop have made it very clear that, while they're not members of the Communist Party, they still believe in Communist doctrine. Now, would they use this union as a background for further Communist activities? Would they use the treasury to promote Communist thinking? I think these are the things that you have to consider. I think these are

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important things, because there's no doubt that they're professionals.

Academically, at least, I understand that Lux has a bachelor's degree, has taught and now he's here welding. I understand that Siesennop has been offered [union] staff jobs and he's over here as a janitor, and I think these are the kind of things that you have to take into consideration when you're making your decisions, but I think the issue is still clear, and it's a small one: are they in violation of the constitution and the bylaws as you read them?

The question of the constitutionality of the union's five-year ban is now, as the lawyers say, mooted. That probably is just as well for Lux and Siesennop because the case was in the court of federal district Judge John Reynolds, a liberal who was once governor of Wisconsin. He ruled two years ago that the federal court could not intervene on behalf of Joseph M. Driscoll, who had been denied a chance to run for office in Local 139 of the International Union of Operating Engineers because he refused to sign a non-Communist affidavit. That, said Reynolds, was the internal business of the union.

Though the appeal to Meany and a major part of the legal case have been decided, the dispute still is not settled. Lux said he and Siesennop intend to continue a suit for damages, though they probably will not demand a new election, which Meany warned "may delay and disrupt the collective bargaining negotiations." And they face a libel suit.

The libel suit was brought by Jimmie Finch, an A.O. Smith foreman, who was described as an "overseer" in

the "Foreman of the Month" column of the mimeographed newspaper published by Rank and File, a radical shop caucus of which Lux and Siesennop were two leaders. "Foreman of the Month" was a sarcastic put-down of foremen considered abusive or unfair.

Siesennop and Lux say Finch's suit is a management strategy to force Rank and File to disclose the names of its members—between thirty and fifty of them, they say. A.O. Smith does not comment. Finch's attorney, Alexander Rubin, said he needed the names in order to know who was responsible for the article. "I do not believe personally that Jimmie Finch is using me on behalf of management," said Rubin, known locally as a liberal. "If I thought so I would not participate professionally."

If the controversy simply pitted young radicals against middle-aged cold warriors it would be easy to understand. But it is not that simple. Rank and File once worked closely with Blackman's caucus, and endorsed him for president of the union. Lux and Siesennop still are not able to explain quite what happened. And while Lux and Siesennop are young—in their late 20s—they are as much products of the 1930s as of the 1960s.

Lux was a member of a mildly rebellious student organization at Marquette University, called Respond, which used to remonstrate piously with the Jesuits for what the organization considered an unchristian disregard for war and racism. But he and Siesennop came to dislike the erratic enthusiasms of 1960s radicalism.

"I was very dissatisfied with the snooty pseudo-intellectual campus Left," Siesennop replied. "Party people provided consistent leadership . . . and they were about the only people who did." He left the party because Com-

LETTERS (Continued from page 2)

in protecting workingmen and women against the economic hazards of modern industrial society.

Sen. Jacob K. Javits (R., N.Y.)

Columbus, Ohio

DEAR SIRs: Senator Javits does not dispute my statements about what the bills provide. Instead, he misstates what his bill would do and what I have proposed.

A few instances should suffice. Senator Javits declares that he "opposes" my proposed goal that private pension plans should supplement Social Security benefits for all. They should because, at a modest estimate, every year the U.S. Treasury loses \$4 billion in revenue because of tax-sheltered private pensions. A few months ago a Treasury official declared that the upper 8 per cent income bracket get 50 per cent of that tax benefit. I say that we all need Social Security supplementation, that we now are not getting our \$4 billion's worth and if private plans can't do the needed job then that massive subsidy should be withdrawn.

Senator Javits represents that he and I differ over the difference between 25 per cent and 50 per cent vesting after five years. But, as he knows from a public discussion he and I had at a Senate Labor Committee hearing, I propose starting at 50 per cent after five years and moving rapidly to vesting after one year.

Javits claims "that government studies indicate that only one-third of all currently covered plan participants are vested in their plan. These same studies estimate that upon enactment of the Senate bill more than two-thirds of the

participants will be vested, including many working-women."

But the vesting provisions of the Senate-passed Williams-Javits bill would not take effect until two years after enactment for any existing plan; for collectively bargained plans, the vesting requirements would not become effective until the plan's expiration date, up to a 1981 limit. And there is every reason to believe that plans are being renegotiated to exploit that provision. These delays can be fatal to employees separated in the interim, as many tens of thousands already have been.

But the House-passed bill is even worse. At this writing, the eventual measure will more closely resemble the House measure unless the conferees, starting with Senator Javits, start to battle and cease attempting to justify weak stuff. His counsel, Michael Gordon, publicly expressed dismay at the House bill at a recent Washington conference. Well he might. It incorporates all of the Senate bill's delays and adds a phasing-in provision that cuts down the minuscule vested benefits yet further. Even worse, it would permit employers to ignore *all* service before January 1969, if after January 1, 1969 a separated employee did not have five years of credited service. Under many plans, only part-year service is earned when layoffs and slow work prevent full-time, year-round employment.

And the House bill enables employees to pick among three vesting formulas; naturally, they would pick the least costly, which is the least protective.

And why at this late date does Senator Javits talk about "an estimated 35 million workers under private plans" when the U.S. Treasury stated more than a year ago "that about 23 million workers are covered by private pension plans"?

Merton C. Bernstein

munists could find no effective way to cope with industrial concentration, but he remains devoted to the slow organizing methods that the party employs.

Like many young workers, he and Lux judge the established labor movement harshly. "The union leadership should be required to spend a year in the shop now and then," Siesennop said. "The leaders tend to forget where they come from. . . . The union movement doesn't help much. It hasn't changed from the early 1950s. It can't relate to younger people."

And while the Rank and File newspaper may have criticized the Fascist junta in Chile, it more typically devoted its space to the issues that young unionists are discussing everywhere. How do you move from bread-and-butter to

broader social issues? How do you get greater safety, better health care, longer vacations?

These might be considered the issues of Maoists in disguise, pandering to the complacency of the workers who park their big autos in the A.O. Smith lot. But there is no evidence that they were not authentic concerns or that Lux and Siesennop had ulterior purposes.

As the movement of the 1960s crumbled, it was fashionable for young radicals to talk about organizing in factories, but that meant dirty work. Few were willing to accept it. Lux and Siesennop did, and it is not surprising that they had trouble. The remarkable thing, perhaps, is that they didn't have more. But, as Siesennop said, "Anti-communism ain't what it used to be." □

'WE NEED A GENTLE SOCIETY'

OVER COFFEE WITH OLOF PALME

ROBERT SKOLE

Stockholm

Prime Minister Olof Palme selected a table near the windows in the Parliament House cafeteria. As we drank our mid-morning coffee, we looked out over Sergels Torg, the central traffic roundabout and pedestrian square at the heart of downtown Stockholm.

Workmen were putting finishing touches on a 100-foot-high glass sculpture in the center of the square's large pool and fountain. Across the square, doors were opening for the day's business at the main office of Skandinaviska Enskilda Banken, the largest commercial bank in Scandinavia. On the opposite side of the square, which later in the day would accommodate a good number of hippies (or whatever they are now called), department stores and specialty shops were getting ready for the day's business. And in Sweden, business, and industry, is booming as never before.

Traffic at this hour was relatively light, it being past the morning rush. A stream of construction trucks moved to and from "the hole," the huge city center rebuilding project back of the new Parliament House. This project has been under way for at least fifteen years—scores of blocks of old buildings being torn down to make way for new ones.

Sitting here at the very hub of what is today the wealthiest nation on earth (figured in gross national product per capita), Olof Palme could look out over the material success of the Swedish "middle way." By all normal politicians' standards, he should be satisfied. His Social-Democratic Party has been the government party for forty-one years. It gained office in the depression, just after the Ivar Kreuger crash, and has held it (mostly alone, but some years in coalition) ever since. If world championships were awarded for successful political parties in a

democracy, Sweden's Social-Democrats would win hands down. And Olof Palme, who became Europe's youngest Prime Minister when he succeeded Tage Erlander in 1969, is today the European Prime Minister who has held office longest.

The government very competently led the nation through the most recent crisis, the oil crisis, unscathed. Sweden is the world's largest oil consumer (again on a per capita basis) and with no domestic oil, coal or gas, things looked bleak when the Arab nations announced their cutbacks last year. There were a few weeks of gasoline rationing, some nonessential electricity was cut back, a massive voluntary savings campaign was instituted and industry kept going at capacity. Oil and gasoline supplies have been normal for some months; there were even some price cuts.

It was at the height of the oil crisis that Olof Palme stressed his misgivings about "the gadget society."

"We are past the stage of waste-makers. We've reached a point where people can question the value of gadgets, where people can see that consumption is not a goal in itself." Palme looked out again at Sergels Torg, a symbol of the welfare state that is also the wealthiest state, and said, "We are at a point where a change in life styles is essential."

But how's this to come about?

"It's all a question of how you organize society. If society decides that human needs should be given priority—to improve care for elderly or handicapped or sick or children—then these needs can be fulfilled by expanding public services. By doing this you create new jobs, and you don't need great amounts of energy or natural resources. You create growth by providing human services rather than by building plastic gadgets."

Palme paused to light a cigarette. (That's one "gadget" he wishes he could do without.) "If society decides that our productive resources could be better used by taking care of people's needs, then the government must try to raise money to provide the services. Of course, there's the other option: to leave it up to the marketplace. But this

Robert Skole has been a foreign correspondent in Sweden for ten years, during which he has written for a number of American publications, including the Washington Star.



Olof Palme

is a fairly brutal solution—there would be many who simply could not afford the costs of services sold on the market and would have to do without. This would lower demand and you'd eliminate job opportunities."

That all sounds fine in theory, but how do you work it practically?

"First, you can organize this only if society decides to do so collectively. It's a gradual process. You must ask, where are the priorities? I'll give you an example. In our recent budget proposal there was an increase of some 100 million kroner (\$22 million)—no, it was more than that, actually—anyhow, it was for creating some 7,000 new *hemsamarit* jobs. These are 'home samaritans'—women (or men) trained to help elderly or ill or shut-ins with household tasks. These home samaritans would be able to help some 30,000 to 40,000 people. This is a very valuable service; it creates contact among people.

"Now we could have proposed that the 100 million kroner be used for tax reductions instead of expanding the home samaritan service. And surely if there were a tax deduction, some of the money would be spent on plastic gadgets and this would have some benefits, and would provide some people with jobs."

Palme is anxious to stress that creating the "nonwaste society" is a "gradual process." Leaning across the plasticized table top and over our plastic serving tray, he says: "It doesn't mean that you suddenly decide, 'O.K., from now on, no more plastic gadgets.' All the time you have a number of choices. If the aggregate benefits to society clearly show that you should invest in social benefits, such

as home samaritans, rather than in plastic gadgets, then you take that choice. But I never say, 'Stop—no more plastic gadgets!'"

But surely there are benefits to be gained from "gadgets"—what's a gadget anyhow?

"That's right—I'm not trying to ban gadgets. But it's not too difficult to design and make things that are durable. We've had our washing machine at home for sixteen years and it works very well."

By the way, are you still driving that old Fiat?

"No," he laughs. "It finally fell apart. We have a Saab station wagon now—it's just large enough to carry our boy's ice hockey gear."

Palme does not say so, but the Swedish auto industry is perhaps the only one in Europe that did not suffer as a result of the oil crisis: both Volvo and Saab are increasing their production this year. And for many years, their successful sales pitch has centered on safety, good engineering and durability.

"You won't have to worry about building in obsolescence in order to maintain demand and productivity," says Palme, anticipating my question. "There's a tremendous world market in need of useful products."

At that point we were joined by Anna-Greta Lejon, Minister of Labor for Working Environment Affairs. She is 35 and looks 22, with her straight hair and granny glasses. She joined the cabinet a few months ago in a major organizational shake-up that created some new ministerial posts. She has one of the most significant jobs in the government, for Sweden is in the midst of major new legislation and experimentation in the working environment.

This ranges from entirely new approaches to production to laws that allow local safety ombudsmen (ordinary workers, but especially trained in safety) to order unsafe or unhealthy jobs shut down; from a project which has successfully demonstrated that women can be employed in jobs traditionally held only by men, to a brand new scheme that will force companies to set aside 20 per cent of their pre-tax profits in a fund to be used for working-environment projects approved by the workers of each company. One of the most important pieces of legislation requires that two employee representatives be named to all corporate boards of directors. And a very recent proposal will allow employees to take leaves of absence for unlimited times to pursue studies. (This could be a forerunner to the "sabbatical year for everyone" scheme that some Americans are talking about.) And in the wind is a move to create a six-hour working day, to give working mothers (and fathers) more time with their children.

Despite all this, Palme is not satisfied. In his just published book, *The Desire to Go Further*, he bluntly discusses shortcomings in Swedish society, and outlines needs.

Isn't this admitting that your Social-Democratic Party has not really succeeded? After all, you've held power for forty-one years.

"Not at all. For you must compare Sweden today with what it was in the past, and compare it with other countries. This is a good society; I don't know of any better. But politics is not to defend past deeds; it's to formulate guidelines for the future. In my book, I compare society

as it is with what I'd like it to be. There are still grave defects."

One of the "defects" he mentions is what might be described as the lack of human warmth in a very efficient, technically advanced, social welfare system. Palme talks of Swedish hospitals and nursing homes that have the best facilities and equipment available and that could stand as world models on the technical side—in treatment and "hardware." But he tells of how some nursing homes must bed down patients for the night in the late afternoons, because they lack personnel for the evening shift. He then repeats a story told him by a Swedish physician, who was in Paris and saw an elderly lady being carried by ambulance personnel into an ancient, shabby hospital. But carried into the hospital with the woman was her pet parrot in a cage. Palme wishes that pet parrots could be brought into Swedish hospitals, too.

"I am really scared of bureaucracy. We can make society too mechanical. We create reforms and build up mechanisms to handle them and pretty soon we seem to have created an impersonal bureaucracy."

This, then, certainly cannot be the end result of the famous "middle way" of the 1930s and 1940s, and the "model welfare state" of the 1950s and 1960s? How would you describe Sweden of the 1970s?

"I'd say it will be the first country to try to cure the hangover of industrial society. We've made tremendous

advances in production and in raising the standard of living.

"But slowly people are learning the price they pay for progress: there are gaps between groups of people, there is dissatisfaction with industrial life as it is. A lot of crackpot theories are offered as solutions: conservatism, or back to nature, or revolution. This leads nowhere; it only aggravates a clash. What we must do is see what we can do about renewing production to make work meaningful, to increase equality, improve environment, and to try to create a new, gentle society."

A few years back the Social-Democratic Party was campaigning on the theme, a "strong society."

"Yes—a strong society that would come to grips with major problems of unemployment and social insecurity. But we need a gentle society when it comes to relations between people."

In his book, Palme includes a number of his speeches and writings—including the speech, in which he paraphrased both Presidents Kennedy and Nixon, when he said, "Don't ask what you can do for yourself, but ask what you can do for your fellow man."

Palme says: "There is enormous room to make relations gentle between people."

Ah, but Swedes are Swedes—they are not Italian or Jewish grandmothers.

"No, it's not easy to change a national character. But we can develop." □

A PEEK AT POLICY

SKELETONS IN THE BELL SYSTEM

STEPHEN M. AUG

A cache of hundreds of documents, briefly available last spring, provided for the first time a public look inside American Telephone & Telegraph Co. and its subsidiaries in the Bell System. These documents contained information on issues facing the Bell System that ranged from its newly found competition to ways to increase profits from local telephone service.

Among other things, they disclosed:

¶The extent to which Bell System executives are alarmed by the growth of competition—not just for telephone service but for business communication services as well. These are areas in which AT&T and its subsidiaries have enjoyed a virtual monopoly for many years.

¶The types of response to the new competition that Bell executives have under consideration. These include forsaking the traditional policy of only renting telephone equipment and a campaign aimed to destroy the arguments that advocate competition in a capitalist system.

¶A strange reference to a new member of the Federal Communications Commission as being one of the "candidates" of a Bell System subsidiary for the post.

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These documents had been filed routinely in a federal courthouse in San Antonio, Tex., in connection with a private antitrust suit, and few people knew of their existence. Then the Washington *Star-News*, using some of the material in the papers, published several articles disclosing the candid, privately expressed views of Bell System executives on competition, politics and the workings of the world's largest privately owned communications monopoly. Within days after the first *Star-News* story appeared, Bell System lawyers were urging the court to seal the documents from public view. They argued that corporations should have as much right to privacy as individuals and that the documents had been filed prematurely anyway. The court agreed and locked the papers away—long after many of them had been copied.

The file contained letters, memoranda and bits of transcripts and presentations made in connection with periodic meetings of presidents of Bell System operating companies. The views expressed by these executives are hardly what they would say in public.

They are frequently critical of the time it takes the Bell System to make decisions; they are clearly frightened at having to face competition for the first time in their business careers; they are angry with the government for having in their opinion endangered not only the company's profits but also the quality of its service.

Consider the conflicting views of AT&T's chairman, John D. deButts. While deButts would make a public speech calling for an end to further experiments in economics—mainly the new competition foisted on the Bell System by federal regulators—privately he would tell his senior executives that AT&T might as well give up on the FCC and take its case over the heads of the regulators to the politicians. What's more, deButts told Bell executives in July 1973 in Minneapolis that providing telephone service to the public is no longer AT&T's biggest problem:

In my talks to Bell System groups recently I've been saying that neither service nor earnings is our biggest problem, but surely technology isn't and neither is financing, but politics is.

Why I say this should be apparent. I am thinking of the gathering of forces outside our business that are challenging its basic structure and that could, should they prevail, impair or destroy our ability to serve.

Two of the forums where these forces are at work, deButts said, are in the second phase of a long-standing FCC investigation into the economic structure of the Bell System, and in the Senate Antitrust and Monopoly Subcommittee, chaired by Sen. Philip A. Hart (D., Mich.), where there are on-and-off hearings about competition in telecommunications.

DeButts then went on to tell the executives what he wanted them to do: "I . . . want to say . . . how important I believe it is that every man in this room take upon himself personally the responsibility for assuring that our case is understood by the people who may well come to decide it eventually. I mean your Senators and Congressmen."

And to criticize them for not doing this job in the past: "It's pretty obvious that if they are to know us we must know them. I must tell you, however, that again and again I have been disappointed to discover—usually too late—that we have no more than a superficial acquaintance, if any, with the legislators whose understanding turned out to be critical to us."

The problem, he said, was not the fault of Bell's public affairs officers—it was the fault of the company presidents: "I consider it to be a basic responsibility of a chief executive officer to represent his business to the people whose views have the most significant bearing on its future. I consider this to be a top priority element in my job—and I hope you will take it as a top priority element in yours too. . . .

"I am not talking about ITT-type influence-peddling or arm-twisting. I am talking about the straightforward candid representation of our views on matters that are clearly important to the public and that any conscientious legislator who cares about his constituents needs to know about and wants to know about."

What was disturbing deButts—the issue he wanted presented to Congressmen and Senators—was the growth of competition in what had been, until recent years, an almost total monopoly by the local telephone company. The competition began in 1968 when the FCC ruled invalid telephone company regulations that absolutely forbade customers to connect telephone-related equipment of their own to telephone lines. This was followed in 1971 by yet another form of competition. The commission an-

nounced a new policy under which almost anyone may set up and operate his own long-distance communications network in competition with Bell.

In his Minneapolis talk, deButts gave the Bell presidents his view of how big a battle was shaping up over competition: "I have the feeling it could be as big or bigger than any we have faced in the past. If that is the case, preserving the integrity of our business and its ability to serve is going to call for every friend we can muster, all the understanding we can get."

Just what type of battle Bell was prepared to wage was hinted at in a talk several months later—in October 1973—before a Bell System presidents' conference in Portland, Ore. "What we are mounting, at least in academic terms, is a challenge to the concept of pure competition and its entire intellectual rationale," said Paul M. Lund, AT&T vice president for public relations. "Again, in academic terms, we are challenging a sacred cow: the market structure approach to competition. We are or will be saying that this approach to our industry is not only inferior but impossible.

"Contrary to the opinion of Dr. [Vannevar] Bush, proponents of the market structure approach to competition claim that it is possible and desirable to mix competition and regulation without doing violence to the principles of either mode. We say that's nonsense. We say that the result of mixing competition and regulation—especially if the bartender is the FCC—will be that most unpalatable concoction, government-enforced cartelization of the telecommunications industry.

"Now we can use that sort of language in talking privately to economists and regulators, but it would win few converts among politicians and opinion leaders whose belief in the virtues of competition is no less compelling because it is basically visceral rather than intellectual."

Lund went on to say that "antitrust in the United States is a form of national religion. Unlike the merely theological religions, the propagation of this one doctrine by public means is entirely constitutional. (Your children may not be able to recite the Lord's Prayer in school, but the ACLU probably would defend their right to pledge allegiance to the Clayton Act!)"

Lund was highly critical of the manner in which the FCC has brought about competition in the communications industry—in effect, it has made its decision to allow newer, smaller firms to compete in providing specialized communications service. But the FCC cannot allow these firms "one of the freedoms implicit in genuine competition: namely, the freedom to fail."

That, said Lund, is one reason why the FCC has not allowed AT&T to abandon its traditional system of uniform prices for services, in favor of a system whereby it charges lower prices where costs are lower (where there is competition) and higher prices in higher-cost areas (where Bell has a monopoly). "It would bring about real competition in the provision of intercity private line services, and that is not what the Common Carrier Bureau wants," Lund said.

The Common Carrier Bureau is the section of the FCC that regulates telephone and telegraph companies, and Lund gave his view of those who run it: "Most of these

administrators have never fought an election. They have little taste or sympathy for the processes of representative government. They instinctively resist the suggestion that they should be made accountable to the general public."

On the same program with Lund at the Portland meeting was Daniel E. Emerson, then an AT&T vice president for regulatory affairs—that is, dealing with the FCC. He is now an executive at New York Telephone Co. Emerson gave the executives his view of things down at the FCC. After pointing out that Commissioner Nicholas Johnson was still drawing pay as a commissioner—four months after his term had formally expired—Emerson said:

"And it wasn't until September that the Administration finally submitted to the Congress a successor—Jim Quello, one of Michigan Bell's candidates. . . ." There was no more elaboration on just what Michigan Bell had done to advance the candidacy of Quello, a retired Detroit broadcaster who has since received Senate approval and been sworn in as a commissioner.

In fact, when questions were asked by the Washington *Star-News*, Edward B. Crosland, then an AT&T vice president for federal relations and now a senior vice president, attributed the statement to the manner in which Emerson had often identified individuals—"as being from certain companies' areas geographically. It would be inappropriate and unreasonable and undesirable for us to have a candidate." Quello and David D. Easlick, president of Michigan Bell, both said they barely knew each other—they'd met once by chance on a plane last autumn.

An examination of the stack of material filed in the San Antonio antitrust case—which was brought by several small telephone equipment suppliers—shows that for at least four years AT&T officials have been wrestling with a variety of ways to meet competition.

One of the most controversial ideas, still being discussed within the company, is the possibility that AT&T and its subsidiaries might sell telephone equipment, rather than just rent it. Notes taken during a meeting of Bell System presidents in May 1972 pointed out that, as far as equipment is concerned, "our principal vulnerability to competition lies not so much in our products as it does in our inability or unreadiness to provide the price options customers want, most notably the option to buy. A decision to really compete, it was stated, necessarily carries with it a decision to sell."

Such a change could radically alter the manner in which the Bell System does business. Carried to its extreme, it could make the Bell System much like a huge, nationwide electric company which essentially supplies the wires, while its customers plug their own appliances into the network. What has AT&T executives really worried about selling telephone equipment is that it would open the door to "certification." Under such a procedure, the FCC and AT&T would develop technical standards for the manufacture of telephone-related equipment. Companies that met the standards could sell this equipment to anyone—and customers could then plug it into telephone lines without paying additional monthly charges to Bell companies, as they must do now either to rent equipment or for an "interface" device which Bell companies insist on placing between company lines and customer equipment.

The results of such a program are obvious. AT&T would lose hundreds of millions of dollars annually in revenue from extension telephones, PBXs (switchboards) and key-sets (push-button telephones that answer more than one incoming line). Company estimates are that \$200 million a year on PBXs and \$35 million on key-sets may be lost by 1975 through competition. AT&T executives are also worried over the possible damage to service from an avalanche of other people's equipment.

There is, however, pressure at the FCC to authorize a certification program, as Emerson explained to AT&T executives in late 1972. "The FCC is hearing almost daily from others (than the commission's own Common Carrier Bureau), who complain that:

"1. Bell delays design of needed connecting arrangements.

"2. Bell improperly installs connecting arrangements—either because of incapability or intentionally to frustrate competition.

"3. There are millions of illegally connected devices today without any showing of harm to the service.

"4. Connecting arrangements are anti-competitive devices—adding costs when customers provide their own devices and preventing customers' equipment from performing at its best.

"Added to such complaints are similar positions by such responsible companies as IBM, RCA and G.E.—whose expertise it is difficult to deny."

In fact, at one point some AT&T official compiled a table showing the extent to which the company's business was potentially vulnerable to competition. Among the highest percentages on the table was the telephone extension market. The table said 40 to 60 per cent of the extension business was vulnerable to competition. Private line services—essentially circuits rented to large businesses or government agencies—also were highly vulnerable by as much as 70 or 80 per cent.

Nearly all of the Bell System's business of transmitting computerized data was said to be vulnerable to competitors, but only 5 to 10 per cent of basic business telephone service and less than 5 per cent of residential service was considered in jeopardy. The same document also indicated that competitors for the public's business weren't all tiny new firms. General Electric Co., ITT, RCA Inc., LTV Corp., Litton Industries and American Can Co. were listed.

At one point about two years ago it seemed there was almost unanimous agreement that, in order to compete effectively with the growing number of companies and the increasing variety of equipment they were supplying to a receptive consumer market, the Bell System should adopt a policy of sale, starting with PBX equipment. "There seems to be little difference of opinion that to compete effectively in the PBX field we need to offer customers the option of purchasing outright," deButts told presidents of Bell System subsidiaries at their meeting May 12, 1972, at the Ocean Reef Club in Key Largo, Fla.

Yet five months later there was still no decision to sell equipment, despite approval of the concept by the chairman of the board. Obviously, the lack of action was annoying a number of Bell executives—both those who

wanted to sell equipment and those who wanted a clear veto on sales. "Why should it take eighteen months, plus the Lord knows how many months, to make a decision on selling our station equipment?" grumbled William J. Whittaker, president of Cincinnati Bell Inc., in a letter to Alvin von Auw, an AT&T vice president.

Whittaker's letter was one of several written to von Auw, who was preparing the agenda for an executives meeting of Bell System presidents. One of the executives even wondered whether AT&T shouldn't hand parts of its business over to the competitors. A.S. Alston, president of Southwestern Bell, told von Auw that the question, "What is our business?," ought to be "'dusted off' to see whether or not we are all thinking alike in terms of competition and the kinds of businesses in which we really ought to be engaged and in which we should vigorously compete, as opposed to those which might very well be handled by someone else."

Thomas E. Bolger, president of Chesapeake & Potomac Telephone, decried the apparent lack of leadership in the competitive environment: "What, if anything, can we do to uplift our marketing effort. . . . The troops are in need of some interim leadership. Perhaps the answer is that I should provide it, but I could use some advice and counsel." Robert W. Kleinert of New Jersey Bell said that he was worried that he couldn't compete in the market for "key" telephones "because of glamour features [provided by competitors] as well as our inability to know where the competition is striking, often until it is too late to be effective."

There is no indication of what answer, if any, the Bell presidents got from von Auw, who is described by one individual in AT&T's New York headquarters as "the man who sits at the right hand of God" (deButts).

Von Auw himself is evidently one of the Bell System's chief theoreticians. His job includes setting up the presidents' conferences, making the agendas, reminding Chairman deButts what he has promised the presidents at earlier meetings—and giving some presentations. An expurgated version of von Auw's talk to Bell presidents at the 1972 Key Largo meeting makes these points:

¶ "Substandard service in these days of vocally effective and irritable consumers is becoming so politically unacceptable that it is hampering our ability to increase rates. Thus we confront a mounting dilemma that must be resolved. *How* remains the number-one Bell System problem."

¶ "We need a new and innovative look at the way we provide local service. The problem of controlling and—hopefully—reducing the rapidly rising local exchange costs requires a more searching study of possible usage-sensitive pricing schemes than we have had to date. And should we not . . . adopt a policy that we will engineer only for peak loads in premium rate periods? And don't we need firm plans to extricate ourselves from the horrors of large flat-rate calling areas?"

"Large flat-rate calling areas" refers to the practice in most of the nation whereby telephone customers may make unlimited phone calls within their own metropolitan areas for a fixed monthly fee. That is unlike the procedure in places such as New York City, where customers

pay for a limited number of phone calls, and additional calls are charged on a "message unit" basis.

In fact, it wasn't until last winter that anyone outside the Bell System knew that a new corporate policy had been devised some time ago to break up such large calling areas, converting them not merely to message unit areas—and smaller ones at that—but installing complex metering equipment that would measure the duration of each call, the distance called and the time of day. Although such equipment is in use in long-distance service, it had been considered prohibitively expensive for local use.

In fact, at the 1972 Key Largo meeting, officials were told that the New York and Illinois companies were "actively engaged in converting to timing on single message unit calling. At the same time, the New York company will seek to convert offices in upstate New York from a strictly flat-rate approach to a combined flat and measured environment."

It warned also that "the companies have been advised that there is to be no further expansion of nonoptional extended area calling, especially on a flat-rate basis. Work is under way to see if large flat metropolitan areas, such as Denver, can be broken down into smaller flat and usage-related rate areas."

The memo went on to discuss new special "budget" services being introduced for low-income families or the elderly who require a telephone mainly for incoming calls. "This type of service is now offered in thirteen states," the memo says, adding that the service is costly to the company, since there is a revenue loss when a subscriber converts from normal phone service to the low-rate service, and the measurement technology—timing of each call—is expensive. Then a warning: "Care must be taken to minimize loss and not create a service which will appeal to a broad segment of the market." The service is intended for a small number of poor people—don't make it so attractive that there will be a real demand for it.

The decision to switch to usage-sensitive pricing—and to break up large flat-rate metropolitan areas—was not made lightly or quickly within the Bell System. Cincinnati Bell's Whittaker—now retired—recalled in his October 5, 1972 letter to von Auw: "Last, but certainly not least by any means, is converting our flat-rate areas to charges based on usage. Again, we have been going along for years and we talk constantly about it, but just how far and how much have we accomplished?"

That was two years ago. The debate presumably had been lively for years before that, even though the basic policy had long since been charted. And if that's a clue to the length of time required for the Bell System to make decisions and then act on them, it could be that, despite the concerns discussed and rediscussed every time Bell presidents meet, the huge corporation—pushed by competition—may begin selling telephones eventually.

This could, of course, lead to the feared "certification," but it would indeed result in competition. And, as former AT&T Vice President Emerson told the assembled Bell presidents in November 1972—albeit giving his own interpretation of an FCC staff official's view—"What could be more appealing to the American public than a solution based on the generally accepted principle of open competition? Why, it is the American way." □

BLACK STUDIES FALL INTO PLACE

RICHARD A. LONG

Atlanta

Since their inception, Black, or Afro-American Studies have had the dubious distinction of being the object of the most journalistic surveillance accorded to any area of study in American schools and colleges. And since journalists and their readers are imperfectly acquainted with American education in general, it is not surprising that a confused perception of the Black Studies movement is widespread. Since even many of those involved in education are ignorant of history and rely heavily on the media for their knowledge of the world, confusion about Black Studies prevails even within academia.

The fundamental complicating factor should be faced at the outset, since it can never be dismissed. It is the emotion-tinged reaction of Americans to the word black when it refers to the people of African descent, whose very presence in the land mocks the American Dream. There is a special irony in the fact that the invisible immigrant should bear this burden rather than the "vanishing" native American, but history is the mother of irony. The term activist creates tension; black activist induces a fever. Power is arresting; black power chills the blood. And so through a whole domain of semantic pairings. Hence Black Studies can seldom be referred to without creating a sense of foreboding among those who hear the word. If this fact can be faced squarely, some history and some analysis might be enlightening.

American higher education had its origins in the need to train Protestant ministers of the gospel and its early history is profoundly marked by that primary aim. Gradually other elites were embraced, but the classical-Biblical curriculum and the high cost of college education made the campus a privileged preserve. The creation of the land-grant colleges, along with other social changes following the Civil War, gradually diversified the curriculum to include technical, professional and modern studies, though it was not until the 20th century that even such disciplines as English literature were adjudged truly respectable. The cornerstone of English literature, college catalogues of the time clearly show, was *Beowulf*. American literature did not exist as an autonomous field until the nationalism of World War I brought it into being. Sociology and other loose fields of study such as journalism began to appear, not without opposition, taking advantage of the breach afforded by the study of Washington Irving and William Cullen Bryant.

The teachers of the classics and their scattered allies smirked with discomfort as the outline of what could and should be taught was twisted and turned in response to pressures from the radical and perhaps avaricious aspirations of newcomers to higher education. Some particu-

larly nationalistic souls, inspired by the works of Charles A. Beard, Vernon Parrington, Lewis Mumford and others, began to think that American colleges should teach something called American Civilization, or at least American Studies, to free America's mind from the pall of Europe. Some progress was made in this movement during the 1930s, though it is not possible to say whether the depression was a help or a hindrance. Certainly, most of the WPA cultural activity advanced the American Studies movement. World War II, however, decimated the colleges and stifled innovation completely.

It is safe to say, however, that the turbulent history of the American college curriculum, from the Civil War to civil rights, caused almost no ripples outside a limited circle of school watchers. But from the very beginning of the civil rights movement, colleges were involved, both negatively and positively. College students (never more than a tiny minority) participated in civil rights marches, rallies and campaigns. George Wallace used a court order opening the University of Alabama to black students as an instant springboard to public attention.

Civil rights spread to the colleges as articulate students decried their status as the niggers of Academe and demanded student rights, including the right to participate in hiring teachers (a right enjoyed by students in some medieval universities) and to have a say in the curriculum. The chief victim of the latter demand has been the modern foreign language requirement, where the student demand reflected the unspoken wish of administrators and of most faculty.

Then developed the insistence upon greater relevance in college curricula to what seemed the urgent issues of the day—Vietnam, neo-colonialism, economic injustice. Black students in white colleges backed this demand with a passion that is at least understandable. The fact that there were enough black students to make a difference was a result of the civil rights emphasis on what has come to be called affirmative action—that is, the active recruitment of minority groups in tax-supported or tax-aided institutions, instead of subtle and not-so-subtle discouragement.

Black students, in the climate of inquiry and challenge which developed in the late 1960s, began to ask why it was that the black man appeared in the curriculum only in the guise of a contemporary social problem, an essentially pathological specimen. He had, or so it seemed, no art, no literature, no history—or at least none that it behooved universities to recognize. Many educators were confident enough to pronounce that this was indeed the case. In a fairly provincial manner, the black students were in fact challenging the provinciality of the academy itself. It should have required no great imagination to foresee that the system which had so grudgingly acknowledged the validity of the American experience, even in its mythic and lily-white version, would oppose any further infringement of the Euro-centric focus of its program. Yet the university, punning on its name, constantly claimed universality as its domain. In

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fact, that universality was extremely selective and exclusive.

The reaction to the idea of Black Studies was virulent on the part of those who had a vested interest in the academic and the societal *status quo*, a *status quo* which has a deep and tortured history that is nowhere so well rehearsed as in W.E.B. DuBois' *The World and Africa* (1947). His thesis there is that, in order to justify black slavery and the colonialism which followed it, post-Medieval Europe was forced to create and develop a myth of black and colored inferiority, which in turn became a foundation principle of Europe's modern world.

DuBois himself, in the early 1930s, proposed for the black colleges of the United States a fundamental curriculum change which would begin with the black man and his experience and reach out to universality. He argued that the American college, having taken Europe as its core, never penetrated beyond it in dealing with the world.

The assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1968 initiated a fantastic wave of emotion which effectively separated black student protest from the general student movement and caused it to focus specifically on the colleges in relation to black people. Out of this process of confrontation and analysis several distinct demands grew: they were not always separated in the minds of the students:

(1) That there should be included in the curriculum a sober and unpathologic view of the black experience.

(2) That black students should be admitted in greater numbers to institutions of higher education.

(3) That the colleges, particularly those contiguous to black communities, should either make a contribution to those communities and/or assist the students to do so.

There was frequent extravagance in the manner in which these proposals were framed, and they were often accompanied by other demands which reflected local situations. It is important to remember, too, that the extravagances often crept in only after responsible student leaders found themselves unable to get a serious hearing from administrators. Hence a crisis situation developed, quite unnecessarily, as a prelude to discussions.

The third widespread demand—that of “community involvement”—was based on a mistaken perception of the role of universities and colleges in American society and usually reflected the frustration of students who felt guilty and impotent concerning the conditions of blacks in circumstances other than theirs.

Some of the rhetoric led to the hasty conclusion that many black students were demanding something called Black Studies which all blacks would take. That was hardly the case. What most black students were demanding was the presence of the culture and experience of black people as an area of study and inquiry, whether or not they personally would elect to pursue such studies. The first groups of students often felt an obligation to take at least one Black Studies course, but the next student generation obviously does not feel constrained to do so. The fact that the courses are there is a source of satisfaction to them, but does not impose an obligation.

The Black Studies movement, however, by demonstra-

ting and denouncing the traditional college curriculum as narrowly racist and sexist, has engendered a succession of other “interest” studies, including Puerto Rican, Chicano, Native American and Women's Studies. New York City has recently seen the inception of Jewish Studies. An academic Revolt of the Ethnic is now in full swing, in part aided by the Ethnic Heritage Act. We hear of Scandinavian, Polish, Italian and Greek Studies. This movement does not betoken either chaos or atomization, but is a necessary corrective to the limited conception of human history fostered by an educational establishment with a linear perspective that regards a mythic homogeneous American Republic as the final outcome of the Athenian city-state, itself mythic. Because that Athens of the schoolrooms is one of gleaming white marble in which democratic citizens held the philosophers in honor, while the real Athens was a polychrome city in which slaves, women and aliens were denied any public voice, whose citizens executed Socrates, and from which Aristotle fled in fear for his life.

As an academic area, Black Studies and the other studies whose inception it has inspired, face more or less the same problems which lie in wait for any interdisciplinary study in American institutions. Significantly, the American Studies experience is the true paradigm for their situation. One may with relative ease create and validate such specialized courses as Afro-American History, the African Background, Black Music, the Black Worker. Weaving them into a full and coherent picture of black people in America or black people in the world is truly beyond the capacities of most teachers and most students. An acceptable compromise is difficult to negotiate, but even if one is negotiated, the vocational bias of American thinking rears its head and the insistent question comes: what use is a degree in Black Studies? The question makes as much sense or nonsense if one substitutes English Literature, Philosophy or Sociology. Few of the majors in these well-known specialized disciplines “use” their training in any vocational sense. Is it then all a mistake? Some would say yes; others would say no, because it makes them “understand.” By the same token, a broad-spectrum look at any portion of the human race leads to understanding, which is certainly in international short supply.

Seen within the framework of the role and rituals of American higher education, Black Studies may be viewed as a not unnatural, but vastly overdue, development in the programs of institutions devoted, in at least one dimension, to the exploration of the world around them. The extravagant expectations, the journalistic monitoring, the academic backbiting, the public breast-beating—led at one point by the now fallen Spiro Agnew—were all inevitable by-products, not of the movement itself but of America's paranoia at the contemplation of its black minority. □

SUMMER SCHEDULE

During the summer, *The Nation* will not appear on the following dates: July 13, 27; August 10, 24.

BOOKS & THE ARTS

F. O. Matthiessen and the Democratic Spirit

GEORGE H. DOUGLAS

From the date of its publication in 1941, F.O. Matthiessen's *American Renaissance* has been widely acknowledged as one of the most distinguished books ever devoted to the subject of American literature. It is in fact a book which seems to stand alone in its genre, perhaps in part because great works of the historical imagination are rare in any era, but also perhaps because it represents a culmination and finest flowering of a very brief period in our history when young men were vitally interested in our native past and saw in it something more than an inert repository of facts to be gathered up for tracts and Ph.D. dissertations. Today, on the other hand, we see a steady stream of books that tell us how the democratic and humanitarian traditions have died out in America, so it is something of a pity that we have had so few books, like *American Renaissance* and Parrington's *Main Currents of American Thought*, which tell us, with gusto and enthusiasm, how we once lived and breathed, and at what noble heights.

Matthiessen, until his death in 1950 a professor of American literature at Harvard University, never produced a monumental body of work—a corpus—in the manner, let us say, of Edmund Wilson, so his career as a man of letters has become somewhat obscured with the passage of time. Indeed, none of his other critical works—he did volumes on Sarah Orne Jewett, T.S. Eliot, Henry James and Theodore Dreiser—comes even remotely close to *American Renaissance* in stature; those are all works of high quality, but they could have been written by a hundred other scholars. They are competent books, but aloof and detached professorial exercises, addressed to neatly defined scholarly problems, but not rising to the heights of historical imagination. It was only in *American Renaissance* that Matthiessen wrote without restraint and allowed himself the luxury of complete personal identity with his subject matter.

George Douglas is now at work on a study of the historical style of literary criticism, concentrating upon writers such as Parrington, F. O. Matthiessen, Van Wyck Brooks, Edmund Wilson and Alfred Kazin.

And needless to say it is precisely this that explains the greatness of the work. Emerson once observed that "the use of history is to give value to the present hour," which is to say that the only great historical writing is that which answers to some compelling present need. A man must be open to life as it is currently going on if he is to have anything important to say about the past. This idea, which Emerson imbibed in his encounters with German romantics like Goethe and Herder, was well expressed at the beginning of the 20th century by Benedetto Croce, who said that all real history is contemporary history. The only way that the past can be resurrected is by people who have some contemporary use for it, who can fuse it with their own most intimate projects and needs. History never comes alive when it is merely studied or analyzed. It has to be lived again.

There was a small group of young Americans, most of them coming to maturity just before or after World War I, who insisted on reliving or revitalizing the American past, who made a personal reappraisal of American civilization. They were not content with merely dredging up the past; rather, they sought to merge themselves with the American spirit, to discover what part of it was useful to their present projects and how they might share in it themselves. Thus it was with Van Wyck Brooks and Randolph Bourne, with Vernon L. Parrington and F.O. Matthiessen. When Matthiessen finished writing *American Renaissance* the obvious merit of the work was that the writers and the period he had written of had touched him to the quick; he had projected himself and his ideas backward into time so that he could feel an intellectual harmony with the writers of the Renaissance, enjoy a feeling of contemporaneity with them, and thus bring them alive before our eyes.

There are many themes treated in *American Renaissance*, but perhaps the most important of them is the theme of the democratic spirit that pervades American letters in the middle of the 19th century. The announced subject matter of the book came from Matthiessen's "realization of how great a number of our past masterpieces were pro-

duced in one extraordinarily concentrated moment of expression." The half-decade of 1850-55 saw the appearance of *Representative Men* (1850), *The Scarlet Letter* (1850), *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851), *Moby-Dick* (1851), *Pierre* (1852), *Walden* (1854) and *Leaves of Grass* (1855), and the authors of these books, Emerson, Hawthorne, Melville, Thoreau and Whitman, are undeniably among the greatest American writers. These works and their authors are held together by a number of other strands of thought, but none is more interesting, and in Matthiessen's hands more fruitful, than the theme of the democratic spirit in American literature.

Matthiessen's treatment of this theme is closely related, superficially at least, to Parrington's large project of writing a history of American letters from a liberal, Jeffersonian point of view; but Matthiessen made clear in his introduction to *American Renaissance* that he would be less concerned than Parrington with the background of his writers than with the foreground—with writing itself. The central focus was to be aesthetic rather than sociological. Furthermore, while his point of view, like Parrington's, was liberal and humanitarian, he came, through his close reading of the texts, to a much more complex and sophisticated approach to the notion of democracy. While Parrington was primarily interested in doctrine, in the theory of democracy as it manifested itself in its various branches and flowerings, Matthiessen was determined to uncover the spirit of democracy. He wanted to find not the main currents of democratic thought in our literature, but its most intricate physiological processes. He wanted to see how the democratic traditions penetrated the whole of our life, not only our public ideology and political theory but the ancient rituals of birth and death, our sense of the tragic, the comic, the practical and the commonplace. He wanted to see how the democratic spirit made possible both a rich national life and a proliferation of great literary art.

Matthiessen liked to think of himself as a Christian Socialist, although he freely admitted that this term had many deficiencies, not the least of which was the possibility of confusing

it with certain worn-out European political parties of that name. The truth is that these words had largely an intimate, existential meaning for Matthiessen, and should not be construed as having either an abstract or a historical referent. One gets the feeling that the two words fused for Matthiessen into a single entity, that the two words are but opposite sides of the same coin, one side merely providing support and amplification for the other. Matthiessen's socialism and his Christianity were both visceral; neither involved a hardened body of doctrine. To understand them you have to grasp the possibility they suggest. Similarly, if you want to find out what democracy meant to Emerson, Thoreau, Whitman, Hawthorne and Melville, it isn't sufficient to trace their respective ideologies. For the important thing about them is not their democratic views but their democratic vision, their instinctual faith in democracy.

The distinction between the two is important probably because we have little of our original democratic vision left. Insofar as anything of the democratic faith and the democratic traditions of the 18th and 19th centuries survive it is only ideology, only a stale body of practices. Young people in college today scarcely know why their forebears thought that America was the last great hope of mankind, hardly can conceive that once men put all of their love and devotion into building a life on this continent. A large measure of the greatness of Matthiessen's book is his persistence in remaining true to the spirit of democracy as it was once found sweeping through every nook and cranny of American life—yes, even down to the way we practiced our handicrafts and carried on our daily business.

Matthiessen's major figures, it should be plain, are not really good examples of democratic thinkers in the commonest sense of those words today. Parrington certainly would not have thought them so. Not one of them was an important political thinker, if by that we mean that his first concern was with distinctly political questions. Nearly all were isolated, lonely figures, cut off from the larger workings of society. None were do-gooders, "positive thinkers," uplifters, reformers. Not one offered sure formulas to erase all the sorrows of the world. Thoreau once remarked that if he knew that someone was coming to his front door to do him good he would let himself out at the back door. The natural instinct today is to think of these writers of the American Renaissance as great individualists, not great democrats. But of course this

testifies to our poverty-stricken notions of democracy, to our inability to grasp what it once meant to live in a natural, instinctual human community. In the days of the early Republic, before the Civil War, and before industrialism crowded in upon us, democracy meant a great deal more than a body of doctrine employed to assert one's rights, to shove the other fellow into line—rather a faith, a total approach to life.

Before the Civil War there was an almost universally held belief that America was a great and noble experiment, that its grass was greener and its trees purer and sweeter-smelling than those of all the older nations of the world; that our civilization contrasted sharply with all the corrupt and careworn civilizations of Europe with their dead caste systems, polluted aristocracies; that, above all, Americans enjoy a common fellowship of humanity, that even the hermit in his cave is somehow a neighbor sharing everyone else's interests and desires. And even the epic hero, when he makes his appearance, is a democratic hero. That is, he doesn't stand away from his fellows, is no romantic *Übermensch*, but lives amongst the people where things are happening. Everything can be allowed, everything tolerated, in this new world: individual eccentricities, oddities, kinks, all can be swallowed up in the great ocean of democratic unity.

It was a world of brotherhood, this early America. Doubtless that is why Matthiessen stressed the underlying Christian component of it, or at least why some kind of analogy with Christianity helps us to understand him. The Republic could weather any storm because it was knitted together by a sense of brotherhood and intimacy. Some of the founding fathers, especially some of the Federalists, might philosophize that the people could be dangerous and unruly. But by and large few shared this pessimistic attitude. Thomas Jefferson believed that the American sense of community and brotherhood was so strong that we hardly needed the mechanism of government. When the doubters pointed to Shay's Rebellion as a sign that the people were confusing liberty with license, Jefferson was untroubled. He believed that such uprisings were a mere effervescence of popular feeling, that no harm could come of those tossings in the boisterous sea of freedom. The people might be uninformed, but that was the worst of it. They were not lacking in good will—they merely needed to be put on the right track by good newspapers and good schoolmasters.

Needless to say, such faith in the good will of the people and in the promise of democracy is no longer with us. The people no longer share this kind of faith in themselves and in a unique way of life we can call our own. The old ideals of democracy are there perhaps, but they are totally institutionalized, embalmed. We no longer trust one another. If the people are boisterous it is because they want something for themselves. If they speak of rights they are invariably thinking of something they want enforced against the other fellow. If somebody's house needs to be cold in the winter it had better be the neighbor's house. Instead of a brotherhood of freedom lovers, devoted to the commonweal, we are a nation of lawyers, advocates and special pleaders—perhaps the most litigious people in the history of the world, including even the decadent Romans—pulling for this special interest or that, usually our own.

But in the first half of the 19th century the old instinctual feeling for democracy still burned in its fullest intensity, and it gave birth, in a very concentrated period of expression, to a burst of creative activity which it is convenient to call a Renaissance in American literature. It would be easy enough to point simply to that Renaissance and say that it existed, and, were it not for Matthiessen this is what we would be doing in a feeble sort of way. But Matthiessen showed us, among other things, how the instinctual faith in democracy and in human brotherhood swept through this literature and raised it to its great heights. In each of the writers Matthiessen deals with, the faith was expressed in a completely individual way, and superficially it seems that there is little possibility of reconciling the salty Yankee optimism of Emerson and the gloomy searchings of the soul that resulted in the art of Nathaniel Hawthorne. But they were all distinctly American writers, growing organically out of American soil and responding to thoroughly American conditions of life.

It is natural to think of writers like Hawthorne and Melville, perhaps unlike the others, as cosmic writers who know no national boundaries and whose art is universal. And so it may be. But looking at Hawthorne we must agree with Melville's judgment that the heart and core of Hawthorne's greatness was his sense of the "unshackled democratic spirit in all things." And we have to agree with Matthiessen that this judgment applies just as well to Melville himself as it does to Hawthorne. Melville, we say, is a great writer of tragedy, tragedy is the focus of his life

work; but on closer reading we see that Melville's powers as a tragedian are buttressed from beneath by that great unshackled, democratic spirit. "However baffled he was to become in his head-on quest for truth, in his effort to win any final answer for man's relation to the universe, he was always to retain, even in the bitterness of *The Confidence Man*, a firm hold on the conception of a balanced society, on the desirable relation of man to man. His fervent belief in democracy was the origin of his sense of tragic loss at the distortion or destruction of the unique value of a human being."

Both Hawthorne and Melville, said Matthiessen, were impressed "by the terrifying consequences of an individual's separation from his fellow beings," and their keenly sensitive tragic visions were rooted in their own faith in the stability, the warmth and the promise of the American social order. Which does not mean that they were not shocked and wounded by much that they saw around them in American life, even in the 1850s, for there was slavery, there was violence, savagery, "much intrepid, unprincipled, reckless, predatory" ambition, there was grasping individualism—but somehow the foundation underneath was still there. It was this foundation that gave Hawthorne and Melville the power to penetrate the epic of man alone, of man separate from God, from society, from neighbors.

To be sure, there are a great many other strands of thought weaving in and out of the various essays in *American Renaissance*. It is a full, rich book. But certainly the distinction of the work and its continued and well-justified fame is due in no small measure to Matthiessen's having attempted such an ambitious and sweeping historical project. Had he devoted separate volumes to each of his major figures, the results would surely have been much less remarkable than this large-scale portrait, which gave Matthiessen not only a matrix in which to place his writers, but a panorama on which he could project his own deepest convictions, his own finest feelings. Only through these convictions, only through his own sensitivity to the problems of American life in the 20th century could Matthiessen have discovered so much that was lying just beneath the surface in our literary past.

One of the most frequently heard platitudes about *American Renaissance* is that the book was one whose time had come; if Matthiessen hadn't written it somebody else would have written it within the next few years. Scholars all recognized the powerful bursts of literary expression in the middle of the

19th century—it was just a matter of organizing the facts on paper. But nothing could be further from the truth. Undoubtedly no other book attempting to fill this particular gap in our intellectual history would have the fullness and depth of Matthiessen's book. For *American Renaissance* is not simply a work of scholarship but a tremendous outpouring of Matthiessen's ideas: what gave birth to the book was his own sensitivity to the rise and fall of the Christian, humanitarian, democratic tradition in America. Matthiessen the man was an acute, perhaps one might say pathologically sensitive, observer of the changing American scene—he saw slipping away the kind of relationships that had solidified the old America. Even in his own limited sphere as a teacher at Harvard he was never able to reconcile himself to the erosion of the tutorial system and the trend toward the purely mechanical and quantitative relationship between student and

teacher that began to obtain after the Second World War. Too, there is a certain poignant significance in the fact that he took his own life during the McCarthy hysteria, a period which so neatly characterizes the present American mood of hostile pressure groups, personal estrangement, selfish individualism and soulless legalism.

Like all great pieces of writing, historical or literary, *American Renaissance* is a projection of its author's strongest feelings and convictions. If Matthiessen had not been struggling so intensely and strenuously during his own lifetime with the drift of American society in the 20th century, he would never have been able to penetrate the surface of the great literary movements of the 19th. As it is, *American Renaissance* is no routine assemblage of our major literary figures, but a highly imaginative intellectual synthesis of the kind that comes along only once or twice in an age. □

Something Ominous Here

SULA. By Toni Morrison. Alfred A. Knopf. 174 pp. \$5.95.

JERRY H. BRYANT

Some months ago I reviewed two books by Ed Bullins and Alice Walker, *The Reluctant Rapist* and *In Love & Trouble* (*The Nation*, November 12, 1973). I concluded that they reflected a new swing of black fiction into unexplored territory. Now that I have read Toni Morrison's second novel, *Sula*, I am more than ever convinced that something new is happening in black writing.

Sula, Ms. Morrison's protagonist, has qualities I have seen in a fictional black female only recently. When she is 11 years old, she cuts off the tip of her finger to demonstrate to a gang of threatening boys what she can do to them if she can do that to herself. She swings a child around by the wrists and half intentionally lets him slip out of her grasp into the river, where he drowns. In the shadows of her porch, she watches in an "interested" way while her mother burns to death.

Most of us have been conditioned to expect something else in black characters, especially black female characters—guiltless victims of brutal white men, yearning for a respectable life of middle-class security; whores driven to their

profession by impossible conditions; housekeepers exhausted by their work for lazy white women. We do not expect to see a fierceness bordering on the demonic.

But that is what we're getting from some of the younger black writers. It is not a matter of race, or at least not simply a matter of race. A fascination with evil has crept into black fiction, an interest in the lower layers of the psyche of black characters, in their capacity to hurt and destroy. I don't see that this is as yet a "movement," or even that writers like Bullins, Walker and Morrison have by deliberate plan entered these new areas. But when Bullins shows us a cool rapist or that murderous half-rodent, half-bird that slashes to death its would-be protectors; when Walker depicts an ignorant black sharecropper cutting away his daughter's breasts and blasting her with a shotgun; and when Morrison gives us a Sula, we know we are faced with something quite different from Williams' *The Man Who Cried I Am* or Gaines's *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman*—or, for that matter, Barth's *Chimera* or Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow*.

It is true that Morrison operates within many of the racial commonplaces. First in *The Bluest Eye* (1970), now in *Sula*, she has staked out an area of the Midwest made familiar to us by Sherwood Anderson, the small Ohio town

governed by a rigid moral prudery that dampens spontaneity and twists natural appetites. She focuses on the black sections of those towns and, to the middle-class hypocrisy attacked by Anderson, she adds the racial prejudice of the whites. But this is the weakest strain in her novels, for it is virtually impossible to do anything fresh with a vein that has been mined to exhaustion. We begin to fidget when we see her stacking the deck against such easy marks as the black bourgeoisie and reaching for the heart-strings when describing the humiliation of some proud black soldiers on a Jim Crow railroad car.

Her originality and power emerge in characters like Sula, that we have seldom seen before and that do not fit the familiar black images. One-legged Eva Peace, Sula's grandmother, burns her son to death when she feels he is trying "to crawl back into my womb." Sula's mother, Hannah, entertains men without discrimination in the pantry of Eva's home. Sula's friend Nel realizes that she experienced a thrill of pleasure when she watched Sula's victim drown. Against the background of the respectability of black Medallion, Ohio, these acts and emotions appear as the thrust of some powerful new force, loosening the foundations of the old stereotypes and conventional manners.

Writers like Toni Morrison, like Ed Bullins and Alice Walker, are slowly, subtly making our old buildings unsafe. There is something ominous in the chilling detachment with which they view their characters. It is not that their viewpoint is amoral—we are asked for judgment. It's that the characters we judge lie so far outside the guidelines by which we have always made our judgments.

For example, Morrison at first seems to combine the aims of the Black Freedom Movement and women's liberation. Sula and Nel discover when they are 11 years old "that they were neither white nor male, and that all freedom and triumph was forbidden to them." When they grow up, Nel slips on the collar of convention. She marries, has two children, becomes tied to her "nest," a slave to racism and sexism. Sula goes to the big city, gets herself an education, and returns a "liberated" woman with a strange mixture of cynicism and innocence: "She lived out her days exploring her own thoughts and emotions, giving them full rein, feeling no obligation to please anybody unless their pleasure pleased her . . . hers was an experimental life."

But the perspective Morrison gives us upon these two black women is not pure black freedom or pure women's liberation. We may wish that Nel had

absorbed some of Sula's independence of mind and willingness to take risks, and had not plunged so completely into the humdrum atmosphere of conventional family life, with all its sexist and racial overtones. Yet we cannot approve the freedom that licenses Sula casually to steal Nel's husband and condemn her childhood friend to a ruined life, while she just as casually abandons him. That is not freedom but selfishness, and it is immoral, however contemptuous we may be of the pitifully conventional virtues of married life, or however much we may feel that marriage oppresses women. Besides, the freedom that Sula achieves is as much a prison as it is liberation. Totally free, she becomes obsessed with herself, unable to love, uncontained by the normal rules and boundaries we have come to associate with human beings.

Morrison does not accept—nor does she expect us to accept—the unqualified tenets of either of the two current freedom movements. There is more to both society and the individual, and she

subjects each of these to a merciless analysis. The result is that neither lends itself to a clear moral judgment. For all her selfishness and cruelty, Sula's presence elicits the best in people, diluting their usual meanness and small-spiritedness. Indeed, with Sula's death the "Bottom" dies, its black people rushing headlessly in a comi-tragedy of communal suicide.

The feeling I get from this, however, is not so much that of the familiar literary viewpoint of moral complexity as that of a calm sardonic irony over the impossibility of ever sorting out the good from the bad. This feeling gives *Sula* a portentousness that makes it perhaps an inadvertent prophet, whose prophecy is that all our old assumptions about morality are disintegrating before a peculiarly black assault against them. It is as if Morrison, and other young black writers with her, are saying, like Sula, "If we can do this to ourselves, you can imagine what we can do to you." □

'Every Truth Is a Half-Truth'

THE FREUD/JUNG LETTERS: The Correspondence Between Sigmund Freud and C.G. Jung. Edited by William McGuire. Translated by Ralph Manheim and R.F.C. Hull. Princeton University Press. 650 pp. \$17.50.

MARTIN LEBOWITZ

The correspondence between Freud and Jung began in April 1906, and concluded in October 1913. On April 20, 1914, Jung resigned as president of the International Psychoanalytic Association because his opinions were in "such sharp contrast to the views of the majority of the members." In the summer of that year, the six European branches of the association agreed that, because of "events in the great world," their scheduled Congress, "like many other scientific arrangements, must be postponed for an unspecified time."

The Freud/Jung letters reflect the contentious, vituperative, bitter personalities of both correspondents, and the polemical, competitive, acrimonious atmosphere in which psychoanalysis became an international movement. They reflect the personal intrigues and the political exigencies of advancing the new science, in-

cluding the somewhat hypocritical efforts to enlist the support of prominent psychiatric personalities like Paul Eugen Bleuler (who introduced the concept of schizophrenia and was Jung's superior in the Zurich asylum that employed them both). They also provide evidence of the editorial and commercial vicissitudes of promulgating psychoanalytic doctrine by means of periodicals distinguished by conflicts and resignations, and expressing increasingly divergent points of view.

It is easy to question the scientific pretensions of a movement marked by so much intellectual turmoil and personal antagonism. The two correspondents, in particular, show a certain grandiose belligerence—especially manifest in Freud's tendency to regard disagreement on the part of his associates as neurotic or even psychotic "resistance" to the truth. Jung, too, writes of one dissenter that he deserved "a sound Swiss thrashing." Very suggestive is the characteristic recourse in debate to the exclusive professional "experience" they were both privileged to enjoy as practicing psychoanalysts. Indeed, at one point Freud implies that his approach to psychological problems is "intuitive"; we are inevitably reminded of the role of intuition in Jung's final theoretical system and in his analysis of dreams. There is a measure of truth in the impression that the early psychoanalytic movement was governed in part by a fanatical crusading or proselytizing spirit proportionate to its lack

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of scientific objectivity. Yet Freud's summation of his theoretical and therapeutic attitude is still cogent: the sexual basis of emotional disorder is shown by the fact that the patient is cured by love—that is, by the so-called “transference” relation to the analyst.

The issue of symbolism, mythology and the libido—their unitary character in Jung's view—was an insight derived by negation from Freud; the latter's intense disagreement on this point was the most obvious reason for their final conflict. Freud's letters reveal clear opposition as early as 1912 to Jung's opinion that “psychoanalytic theory [must] be freed from the purely sexual standpoint.” In place of this he proposed “an energetic viewpoint.” Now if this “energetic” viewpoint has anything specific to say in the context of Jung's teleological and mythological preoccupations, it is that adaptation is purposive and dynamic to the degree that it expresses some unconscious and universal—ultimately “noumenal” or religious—truth about human nature, mysteriously invoked to satisfy the developmental need of the individual. Jung's concern with phylogeny, the evolution of the species or the race, was comparable to Freud's in that both began by regarding neurosis and psychosis as a “reminiscence,” a coming to consciousness under stress of critical experiences in the history of the individual and of the biological species. But it was precisely this dynamic relation of the individual to humanity's past that suggested to Jung the creative function of the unconscious. Thus the principles of Jungian individual psychology comprise a negative development of Freudian psychoanalysis—an essential reversal of Freudian theory analogous, one might say, to the “dialectical” derivation of Marxism from Hegelian metaphysics. The reversal suggests Bohr's Principle of Complementarity and its possible application to psychology, and Whitehead's remark that “every truth is a half-truth”—apparently the characteristic methodological insight of our age.

On the other hand, the ambiguities inherent in Freudian theory are shown by the fact that Freud, as early as 1909, regarded all emotion as “the precipitate of a reminiscence,” a type of “normal” hysteria, so to speak. This appears to imply a certain ambivalence on his part toward unconscious processes that may help explain the Freudian derivation of Jung's analytic psychology. For example, a recent writer on Jung, Anthony Storr, remarks that, in opposition to Freud's famous “reality principle,” Jung “puts the inner world of myth and archetype upon an equal footing with the external world. He sees the ego poised, as it

were, between inner and outer, between subjective and objective, with an equal need to relate to each world. The idea that the inner world is in any sense infantile or pathological appears to be alien to him.” In a simple yet precise sense, the contrast between Freud and Jung probably expresses that of materialism versus idealism; indeed, it is precisely Jung's teleological preoccupation that distinguishes his work and accounts both for his idealism, with its mystical implications, and for his (metaphysically) realistic acceptance of myth.

Freud, Jung's senior by nineteen years, writes to him in 1910: “I will leave you more to conquer than I myself could manage, all psychiatry and the approval of the civilized world, which regards me as a savage.” The grandeur and pathos of Freud's view of Jung as his successor, his symbolic son and heir, involve a certain tragic irony. Consider, for example, in the light of the “diabolism” of his later years, the years that nurtured Hitlerism, the following passage written by Jung in 1910:

Must we not love evil if we are to break away from the obsession with virtue that makes us sick and forbids us the joys of life? If a coalition is to have any ethical significance it . . .

must be nourished by the deep instincts of the race. . . . What sort of new myth does it hand out for us to live by? Only the wise are ethical from sheer intellectual presumption, the rest of us need the eternal truth of myth. An ethical fraternity . . . not infused by any archaic-infantile driving force, is a pure vacuum and can never evoke in man the slightest trace of that age-old animal power which drives the migrating bird across the sea and without which no irresistible mass movement can come into being. I imagine a far finer and more comprehensive task for (psychoanalysis) than alliance with an ethical fraternity. I think we must give it time to infiltrate into people . . . to revivify among intellectuals a feeling for symbol and myth, ever so gently to transform Christ back into the soothing god of the vine, which he was, and in this way absorb those ecstatic instinctual forces of Christianity for the one purpose of making the cult and the myth what they once were—a drunken feast of joy where man regained the ethos and holiness of an animal.

The passage is startling in its evocation not simply of Hegel and Sir James Frazer but also of Wagner and Nietzsche.

Although the elements of discord were manifest from the first, the relation between Freud and Jung foundered on the

SOLZHENTSYN

“I think that few people having read this book would be the same as when they opened its first page. In this respect, it seems to me that nothing in Russian or world literature can compare with it.”

—Roy Medvedev

The GULAG Archipelago

Translated by Thomas P. Whitney

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question of Jung's wish to "replace the descriptive concept of libido by a *genetic* one . . . a concept [that] covers not only the recent sexual libido but all those forms of it which have long since split off into organized activities." This rather cryptic remark might be understood to mean, for example, that incestuous motivation ceased to be a definitive attribute or symptom of neurosis but a *symbol*—a myth, that is, or archetypal idea reflecting the civilizing need of repression and order. Hence the irony of Jung's reference in 1959 to "that accursed correspondence . . . reminder of the incredible folly that filled the days of my youth. . . . The journey from cloud-cuckoo-land back to reality"—an increasingly abstract and conceptual understanding of reality that effectively repudiated empiricism. Jung's disparaging references in these letters to intellectualism and to the "scientific" temper are scarcely insignificant. The surprising circumstance is that a relation of this sort ever occurred between two personalities so dissimilar. Admittedly, they were both ambitious and self-assertive, but Jung's outlook and background were poles apart from Freud's. Indeed, the true nature of the relation is obvious to anyone able to sense the disingenuousness of this re-

mark to Freud in 1911: "The feeling of inferiority that often overcomes me when I measure myself against you has always to be compensated by increased emulation."

The historian of this century might see the final irony of the relation in the

fact that despite their incapacity to agree they both expressed the characteristic destructiveness of the age and, in essentially different ways, contributed to it. The book is most valuable for that very reason: the insight it affords can be prophylactic and salutary. □

The Young Man Went East

GO EAST, YOUNG MAN: The Early Years. By William O. Douglas. Random House. 493 pp. \$10.

PETER JOSEPH

Justice William O. Douglas has attached to his autobiography a rather peculiar aim for the genre: "that our people will come truly to love this nation." He tells us in the preface that, aided greatly by his "photographic mind," he wrote the book in his spare time over the last ten or twelve years. Regrettably, that photographic mind seems to have focused on the wrong episodes and that spare time has proved not sufficient to produce a creditable autobiography.

Autobiography is not, of itself, a forum for patriotism or a platform from which to comment on the present. Douglas' work focuses more on irrelevant trivia than on matters of substance. Even when the matters are not trivia, all too often they are still irrelevant, or of marginal interest. It is peculiar that a Justice noted for the eloquence of his Supreme Court decisions, especially those which touch on principled civil libertarianism, should write his own history in the superficial, pedestrian tone that he has chosen. Moreover, it is sad that a man who has done so much for America should not accord the telling of his own life the depth of thought that it deserves. He is remiss in his obligation to history, this man who has himself contributed so much to history.

These remarks are directed only at volume one of the autobiography, covering the period from Douglas' birth to his appointment to the Supreme Court in 1939. It is to be hoped that they will not apply to the forthcoming volume. Douglas' real mark on history is the sum of his decisions over the last thirty-five years—for he is now the longest-sitting Justice in the history of the Supreme Court.

Everything considered, it is remarkable that an elder of some 75 years

Peter Joseph is a free-lance writer living in New York.

should be such a charismatic figure to a large segment of the population, especially since many of his admirers were born and raised during the era of the generation gap. In *Go East, Young Man*, Douglas gives the reader an outline of his own formative years. He recounts his Lincolnesque upbringing in the Northwest and his childhood bout with polio. After several more chapters that include his tale of "the most interesting encounter I ever had with a rattlesnake," and his "last wholly carefree trip in the mountains," Douglas rides the rails East to Columbia Law School, where he begins his studies with no more than 11¢ in his pockets. Soon, however, he establishes himself as a proficient tutor, and earns sufficient money to pay his way through law school.

Indeed, he managed to save enough money so that by the summer following his first year he was able to return to the West to marry Mildred Riddle, a Latin teacher at the Yakima High School. Two paragraphs later, after we learn of Mildred's excellence as a Latin teacher and of her "retiring beauty," Douglas pragmatically justifies divorce, closing with the observation that, "especially for the young wife, it can well be the beginning of a new full life."

After having earned his law degree, Douglas joined the firm of Cravath, deGersdorff, Swaine and Wood. He usually arrived at the offices at 9:30 or 10:00—after having taught an early class at his alma mater. A year later he left Cravath to take up a small general practice in Yakima. That practice, however, was to be short-lived, as the brilliant young lawyer was coaxed back East to teach, first at Columbia, then at Yale. Douglas developed expertise in the field of bankruptcy during these years, an expertise that would be his entrée to Washington shortly after FDR was elected in 1932.

At this point in the book, Douglas digresses. There is a chapter on his doctor, George Draper ("a great physician in the largest sense of the word"), followed by an entire chapter telling us that FDR was right when he warned that

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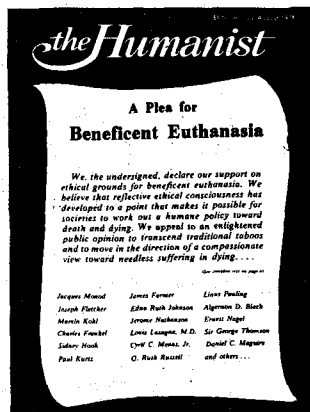
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"The only thing we have to fear is fear itself." The next chapter, "Conservation," features an enemies list, numbered one through nine, that reads more like a litany than a brief, the charges to be accepted on faith alone.

And so *Go East, Young Man* continues, anecdotal and superficial. Douglas' days on the Securities and Exchange Commission under old Joe Kennedy, his promotion to the chairmanship of the SEC, his poker-playing friendship with President Roosevelt, the New Deal and the years leading up to his elevation to the Supreme Court at the youthful age of 40—these are hurriedly spread before us, with a well-deserved sense of pride, but with little attention to the historical substance that the reader expects. This volume of Justice William O. Douglas'

autobiography is a series of superlatives, a who's who of his friends and acquaintances (see especially Chapter XXIV, "Friends and Acquaintances"). The author reminds one of a proud grandfather, with a grandchild perched attentively on his knee, reminiscing about the days gone by.

Justice Douglas is, to me, as he is to so many of my contemporaries, something approaching a deity. His professional record is extraordinary. His decisions from the Supreme Court bench are studies in patriotic eloquence. His vigor, his *joie de vivre*, his love for the outdoors contribute mightily to his almost mystical aura. Perhaps therein is the problem. In *Go East, Young Man*, Mr. Justice Douglas has come down from the heights where the gods reside. □

spacious, clear and virtuosic enough to fill an opera house, where his ballets have often been performed with great success, but the performing manner is decidedly anti-opera house. Whereas ballet choreographers and many modern-dance choreographers feel that dancers ought to look bigger than life, Feld wants them to seem no bigger or smaller than you and me. His point of view is debatable. I sometimes wonder why a person uninterested in glamour and extravagance should be interested in ballet (and on an associated item, why choreography that often would be ruined by brilliant use of toe shoes should be set for toe shoes at all). Yet Feld is one of the few ballet makers whose work is an expression of personal taste as well as an arrangement of steps. If for no other reason than the mere existence of identity in his and his dancers' work, he deserves to be considered the second most distinguished ballet choreographer, after Balanchine, working today.

DANCE / Nancy Goldner

The season's best news is that Eliot Feld has his own company again. Called the Eliot Feld Ballet, it gave its debut season in June at the Newman Theatre, one of several houses in the Public Theatre. The run was so successful that another two weeks, through July 7, were appended. It is important that Feld have his own group for several reasons. By his own admission, verified by several bad-to-so-so ballets made since he disbanded his American Ballet Company in 1971, he finds the life of a free-lance choreographer uncongenial. When working conditions are right he is prolific, but that may be the very virtue from which companies whose repertoires are based on a little of this and a little of that shy away. More importantly, he has

a vision of how ballet dancers should move, and that is a matter of style and manner that lies outside choreography. These questions are the business of artistic directors, who have the time and authority to impose personal taste on dancers as well as to teach them steps.

The Feld dancer has a certain look, and although the Eliot Feld Ballet is only a month old, one may already speak of company style. Feld simplifies certain balletic distortions in the upper body. The arms are straightened and held simply, without the slight rise and break in the elbow and wrist that is so characteristic of the Russian school. The neck does not strive for an elongated line, nor is the diaphragm held with noticeable tautness. Underlying energy and source of muscular control usually comes from the back (it cannot be seen; it is felt), but energy in Feld dancers is diffused and frequently hidden. Very often Feld dancers seem to "just dance" from out of nowhere. Much ballet movement presents itself to the audience; the dancer steps onto her front foot. A Feld dancer must learn to sneak up on pointe, so that she is on her toe before the audience knows she is going there. True, Feld's choreography facilitates this effect by simply having dancers step backward instead of forward onto pointe, but the dancer must learn to deflect weight from the foot that will press into the floor to rise on pointe.

These technical factors that constitute style also control image. Words such as modest, natural and low-keyed come to mind. The new company of eighteen has several first dancers, including Feld, but on purpose nurtures no ballerinas or premiers danseurs. Feld's choreography is

With its as-large-as-life projection, the company was able to make the 300-seat Newman Theatre a fine place for dance. The only dancer to intrude upon the audience (although only in *The Gods Amused*) was Lawrence Rhodes, a world-famous principal on loan from the Pennsylvania Ballet, but then he comes to Feld with a long and problematic history of performance in hysterical psycho-dance dramas whose impact depends on hypertense delivery. Like Balanchine's *Apollo* and to a certain extent Ashton's *Monotones*, *The Gods Amused* is white on white and so is not hospitable to clutched abdomens. On the other hand, Rhodes gave the performance of his life, so far, in *At Midnight*, set to Mahler's Four Rükert Songs. The ballet's themes of loneliness and anguish are entirely compatible with his temperament, but what made his dancing so moving was the way he undercut the most obvious gestures of pain. He was almost repressed, and it was by incomplete expression that he dug out of the ballet its heroism.

The size of the stage was no problem as far as the dancers' freedom of movement was concerned. Indeed, the spatial adaptability of *Intermezzo*, *The Gods Amused* and *At Midnight* must be some measure of their excellence. Space around the dancers was missed at the Newman Theatre, however, because they had no room to effect the most interesting and dramatic trick of dance concerts, when the dancer's ability to fill a cavernous area makes it impossible to perceive an accurate size relationship between dancer and space. The one casualty was *Theatre*, about the overlap of illusion and reality as experienced by Pierrot.

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On a small stage there appeared to be too many people doing too little. But music, on tape for economy's sake, was the main killer. Canned Richard Strauss (*Burlesque for Piano and Orchestra*) made one painfully aware of the fact that Feld had only sketched in the music with dance. In past performances live music carried the ballet in its wake; mechanically reproduced sound leaves *Theatre* in the lurch, a feeble echo of an enfeebled score.

Watching a selection of six ballets from Feld's repertory so well rehearsed under the guidance of the creator himself was in many ways a rediscovery of Feld and a discovery of a few dancers who have fared less well or who were used only in the ensemble in other companies. The season would have been novel enough without new ballets, but Feld gave us two new ones anyway. *Sephardic Song* is one of those deceptively simple ballets in which dancers just dance. That it is like a folk dance, barely more than a series of spirals, swivels and Duncanesque arm movements from her Mediterranean period, reinforces the illusion. Yet there are several concrete reasons why Feld's folk dance could never have been conceived or danced by folk—a constant use of oppositional pulls in the body, a touch of contrapuntal play between dancers, a subtle interplay between simplicity and formality in the patterns for the four women, a delicate use of repetition, a somewhat abstract emotional tone perfectly understood by the cast, and a welcome drop of artifice at the end, when the introduction of a man shifts the whole work onto a different, stronger dramatic plane. But *Sephardic Song* is so effortless that to dwell on the fact that its effortlessness is the result of effort and cunning is to cheat Feld of his magic. Only at the end, with the very masculine presence of George Montalbano, does Feld seem to want the audience to know that *Sephardic Song* is not spontaneous but made. Now one becomes conscious of symmetry and asymmetry, of the difference between soft and strong movement, between soloist and ensemble. Only the spoilsports, like myself, bothered to notice these things all along. For me, analysis was spurred in the form of a question. This ballet should be boring me to death, I thought. Why isn't it?

A wonderful thing about Feld's ballets is that they make one listen to music. *Sephardic Song* helped me to become re-encharmed with Spanish folk songs, arranged by Manuel Valls for flute, guitar and soprano, all in the flesh. One of Feld's achievements was to capture the music's plaintiveness by understanding that the key to that emotion

is modulation bordering on neutrality. Even though many movements could have suggested pain or ecstasy, the tone is in the intangible world of the bitter-sweet.

The spell of *Sephardic Song* is not confined to the moment of performance, which makes it, I suppose, really a spell. The new *Tzaddik*, a Jewish equivalent of Protestant fire and brimstone, is very flashy and arresting and ends the moment the curtain comes down. □

FILMS

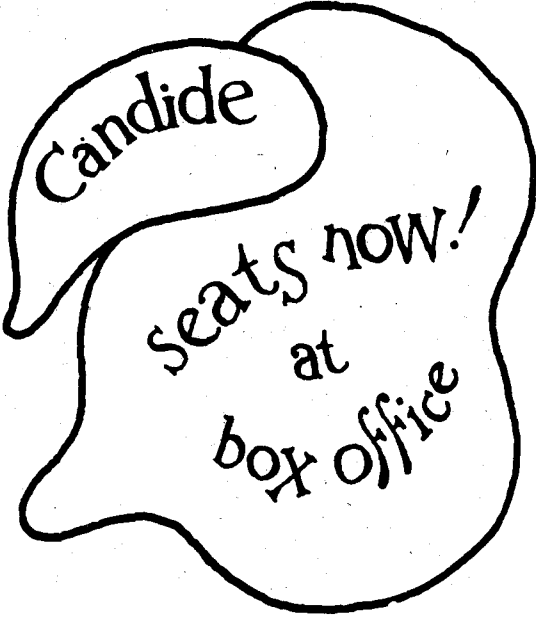
ROBERT HATCH

Chinatown is a real cat's cradle of movie lore, a state of affairs emphasized by the fact that John Huston, whose first work as director was *The Maltese Falcon*, is here playing in support of Jack Nicholson, whose office in the picture is only a little dressier than the warren out of which Humphrey Bogart used to run his private-eye business.

As soon as you see him in the role of J.J. Gittes, you realize it was inevitable

that Nicholson would one day have a shot at the West Coast 1930s genre of adultery, larceny and homicide. He wears the right snap-brim hat, he has the authentic friendly contempt for the regular cops who are out to get him, he is susceptible to women and impervious to sleeplessness and beatings, he is absurdly foolhardy, cynically idealistic and very lucky. Being one of the smartest actors around, Nicholson does not attempt to look, speak or drink like Bogart.

Similarly, Roman Polanski, a director who finds his reality as much on the screen as in the streets, was certain before long to notice what Peter Bogdanovich was doing, and take his turn at running the age of Franklin Roosevelt through a 1970s filter. This does not at all mean that Polanski and Nicholson are coasting by on imitations of other times and other men; they are very much of their own time and *Chinatown* could not have been made thirty or forty years ago. It is basically pessimistic, which popular entertainment back then never was, and it contains details of plot and exposition that would have affronted everyone in the Bogart crowd with the possible exception of Lorre. It is just that the overtones give the picture a special resonance.



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A young man seated next to me at the preview turned eagerly as the lights went up to ask how I, a living survivor of those New Deal days, thought *Chinatown* compared with the private-eye clas-

sics in terms of violence and sex. It was a good question, though more complicated than he perhaps realized, and I'm afraid I put him off with some senile nattering. The fact is that the old Chan-

der-derived films (taking them as the standard) were overtly more violent and sexually more fevered. But the violence in *Chinatown*, when shown, is more excruciating and the underlying sexual situation is morbid. Marlowe went around vigorously correcting small malfunctions in a basically decent world; there is little decent about the world of Polanski, Nicholson and company.

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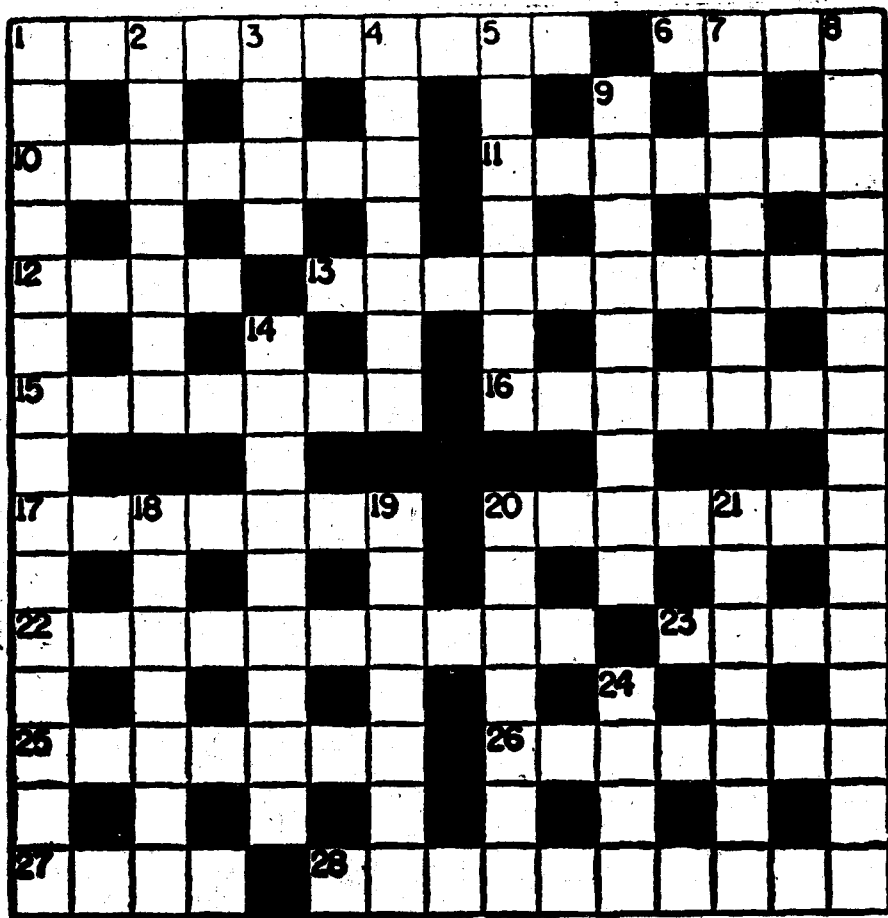
Like its sources, the plot of *Chinatown* is a cat's cradle. J.J. Gittes is hired by someone who is not the person she claims to be (played by Diane Ladd, daughter of Alan Ladd, and thus another link to my lost youth) to gumshoe a man whom she alleges is her erring husband. The real wife (Faye Dunaway) soon turns up in a rage; shortly thereafter the alleged adulterer turns up drowned, and Gittes, feeling that he has been dealt with unceremoniously, determines to get to the bottom of the matter. But then everyone—the wife; her father (Huston), the richest, oldest, most powerful and most unscrupulous man in all of Southern California; various Oriental servants; sundry business associates of the deceased; hired goons; enraged citizens, and the police—league up in what seems to be a conspiracy to thwart Gittes. Several beatings, innumerable sinister rooms and one nasty bit of knife play later, Gittes gets his answer and goes home defeated. The trouble had been that what he wanted to uncover was only peripherally connected with what his contacts were determined to keep hidden. Murder and the theft of a large part of California were small skeletons in their closets.

I can't go into this more fully, partly because the unraveled skein would cover far too much space, and partly because everyone should have the pleasure of working it out for himself. But I think it is not too much to point out that, whereas the film is called *Chinatown*, the action reaches that part of town only at the very end. Something metaphorical is intended.

The picture is a kind of pop masterpiece, bursting with vigor, ingenious as the devil, handsome, efficient, engrossing—and quite deliberately divorced from any reality outside a dark theatre. It has absorbed the past and projected it through the lens of present fears and defeats, but always in terms of man the moviegoer; you bring to this movie what you know about movies—just as to Pop art you bring what you know about a throwaway culture. Pop art is neither realistic nor abstract; it is experience with one dimension missing. I enjoy reacting to it—it makes everything simple and some things clear—even though I'd soon go crazy if I had to live there. □

Crossword Puzzle No. 1545

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

- 1 and 6 Occasionally how one might change from one belt to another. (4,4,2,4)
- 10 Where one might hope to be lucky, being a gentleman thief. (7)
- 11 With the mascara melted, one would expect to see it dark brown. (7)
- 12 Rather sharp change in course? (4)
- 13 A funny burlesque routine—possibly with balloons? (5,5)
- 15 An impairment with the blood drawn, but that's how some like their meat. (7)
- 16 Rise awkwardly, owing to what might be left. (7)
- 17 Retrograde struggle to conceal yourself—being undressed, naturally. (7)
- 20 African Amazon? It's official! (7)
- 22 A gamin might be made to treat bears badly. (6,4)
- 23 The sound says archaically it could be "Adamson." (4)
- 25 Where Esau found a medium of exchange badly confused. (2,1;4)
- 26 Where people might keep their personal accounts. (7)
- 27 Give a blow in return—like crazy, man! (4)
- 28 She once cut a sort that might go over the keyhole. (10)

DOWN

- 1 Gained by quickly going over the original printing? (5,10)
- 2 See 18 down

- 3 Children learn to do it to 6, but 6 will this, as they say. (4)
- 4 You could make it so mad it could cause trouble! (7)
- 5 More like 12, or at least more sticky. (7)
- 7 Shut up! (7)
- 8 A dark time for Sir Boss, but it saved his life. (7,2,3,3)
- 9 Rises with 25. (Pat answers, possibly, if you ask him what he wants.) (5,4)
- 14 It should measure up to your satisfaction. (9)
- 18 and 2 down Certainly not a peace-talk official—if 20 across serves you, it might almost be he! (7,7)
- 19 As sleep is disturbed, 6 passes this way. (7)
- 20 Where Hess was 7. (7)
- 21 What Olivia in *Twelfth Night* did in the matter of lips, eyes, etc. (7)
- 24 Certainly not descriptive of a clerical job. (4)

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 1544

ACROSS: 1 and 21 across Sherlock Holmes; 5 Scruff; 10 Chair; 11 At any rate; 12 Niobium; 13 Retread; 14 Watson; 15 Silicon; 24 Dabbles; 27 Arkwright; 28 Omaha; 30 In effect. DOWN: 1 and 17 Second-hand cars; 2 Elaborate; 3 Lorries; 4 Chapman; 6 Crystal; 7 Usage; 8 and 18 Fielding average; 9 Taurus; 16 Checkmate; 19 At large; 20 Ensign; 21 Hearten; 22 Lead-off; 23 Infant; 25 and 29 Baker Street.

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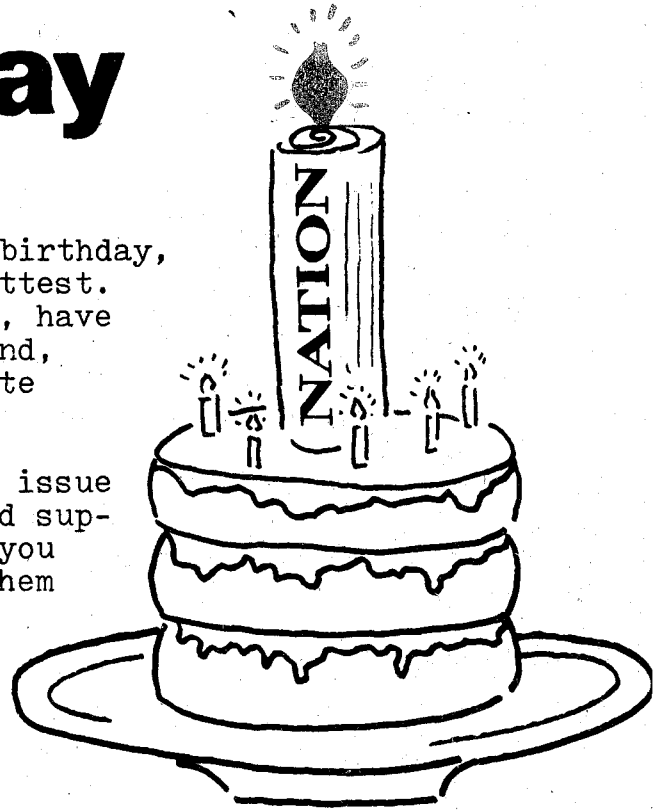
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